

THE
MIRROR OF TASTE
AND
DRAMATIC CENSOR.

VOLUME III.]

MAY, 1811.

[NUMBER V.]

HISTORY OF THE STAGE.

THE FRENCH STAGE.

[Continued from page 212.]

WE are now entering upon the most splendid and delightful part of the history of the French stage, which but opened upon our view in the last number. Of the multitude of satellites who accompanied the great luminary of dramatic poetry in France, CORNEILLE, in his rising, we have said as much as they deserve on their own account, and should therefore dismiss them, if occasional circumstances in the history of some of them, were not too intimately blended with incidents in the life of Corneille to be left unnoticed. The names of those persons, therefore, wherever they occur, hereafter, are to be considered merely as appendages to the more important subject, introduced for the purpose of illustrating it.

The lives of poets are seldom checkered with particular incidents. While the busy world is running its daily round, they get out of the circle; and, while from a distance they view its career, survey the "mighty maze, and expatiate freely o'er this scene of man," rarely become actors in it, take a personal share in its vicissitudes, or stand a chance of encountering those singular adventures

which give such an interesting variety to the lives of those who are actively engaged in the practical business of the world. For a man of such great celebrity, the particulars of Corneille's life are rather circumscribed, and belong rather to his professional pursuits than to himself—to the poet rather than to the man; so that in truth the detail of his life is more a history of his dramatic career and successes than the biography of Peter Corneille.

We have already mentioned that this great man was born in 1606. His first dramatic production of note appeared in 1626. He was then, of course, only nineteen years of age: and his *Melite* (that was the name of the piece) was begotten in the very arms of Romance. His genius, too elevated and enlarged for the study of the law, to which he was destined, frequently disclosed itself in small matters at a very early age, but exhibited so little of any particular tendency that nobody could conjecture what the bent of it was likely to be, nor was he himself perceived to feel any partial bias to the employment of it. The fire lay dormant, and only waited for the breath that was to blow it into a flame—the breath of love, which even at the tender age of seventeen or eighteen roused him into action, and spurred him forward into that career of glory which he was destined by nature to run. This love affair was marked by a singularity of circumstance which claims particular observation: and, as the world is indebted to an affair of gallantry for the comedy of *Melite*, it would be unpardonable in us to omit so interesting a circumstance in the history of the stage.

A young gentleman, an intimate friend of our poet, was paying his addresses to a young lady with whom he was deeply in love, fondly imagining that his passion was returned. Being desirous to have the opinion of a person on whose taste he knew he could depend, and upon the sincerity of whose friendship he thought he could safely rely, respecting a subject so important as marriage, and a person so very dear to his heart as his *chere amie*, he brought Corneille to visit the young lady and introduced him to her in form. From that moment the fate of the unhappy lover, of Corneille, and of *Melite*, was decided: the lady fell in love with our young poet, and, without compunction or reserve, made choice of him, and rejected the lover. Dazzled by a compliment so flattering to his personal vanity, and charmed with the beauty and of course with the superior discernment of the person who had unsolicited given him the preference, Corneille became forgetful of his honour,

and treacherously agreed to supplant the man who confided in him. This was a sorry deed; but the world readily overlooked a crime to which the emancipation of such a genius as Corneille from the trammels of the law was to be ascribed—*Melite* appeared and gave delight, and the culprit was forgiven. The discarded lover's rage was levelled at the perfidious girl, who was certainly most to blame, and who from that time went at Rouen by no other name than that of *Melite*. But the public acknowledged the highest obligations to her, and from that time were inspired with a passion and a just taste for dramatic entertainments, till before then unknown to them.

Though the merits of this first production were certainly great, and were universally acknowledged to be so, it was objected to it, that the interest was enfeebled by too much simplicity. To counterbalance that cause of complaint, Corneille wrote a play called *Clitandre*. This second piece was a tragi-comedy; and here, in endeavouring to shun Sylla he fell into Charybdis: for *Clitandre* was still more extravagant than *Melite* was simple, and Corneille lost much in the public estimation. It happened too that Routrou, of whom mention has already been made, had about two years before brought out a comedy (his first production) called *Le Bague de l'Oubli*, which had very great success, and following up this effort soon after with another comedy called *Le Hyphochondriaque*, he was viewed as so reputable a competitor of Corneille that the superiority of the latter was questioned, and the tragi-comedy of *Clitandre* did much service to Routrou in the comparison.

Encouraged by opinions so very flattering to his genius, Routrou brought out five plays in succession before Corneille added one production to the two already named. The names of these were, *Doristée et Cléagénor*; *L'Heureuse Constance*; *Les Occasions Perdus*; *Les Menechmes*; and *Clemene*. The title of the last but one sufficiently indicates that it was taken from the *Menechmi* of Plautus, to which not only Routrou and after him Regnard, but Shakspeare and Dryden were indebted for the same plot. And *Clemene*, after being corrected and retouched by Tristan, was transcribed anew by Routrou, and brought out with great success under a new name.

While *Clemene*, under the name of *Vanceslas*, was in rehearsal, Routrou being put to jail for a gambling debt, was obliged to sell his property in that piece to the players. They gave him twenty

pistoles for it; but the play having succeeded far beyond their expectations, they voluntarily presented him with a handsome sum. It is to be regretted that an act so truly honourable and exemplary should not be accompanied with the names of the performers in its transmission to posterity. These facts, however, abundantly prove that Routrou was in high estimation with the public.

We have somewhere in our account of the Spanish stage observed, that the works of the Spanish dramatists, crude and irregular though they are allowed to be, were yet so replete with wit, humour, and eccentricity, that they formed a rich mine, from which the French dug up the most valuable materials for their dramas. Thus the *Vanceslas* of Routrou was taken from a Spanish play; nor was the great Corneille himself at all reluctant to delve in the same ground, being indebted to the Spanish for his inimitable play of *The Cid*.

The popularity of *Vanceslas* was augmented by a circumstance so singular in dramatic annals as to be handed down along with it. It was the last play in which the celebrated actor *BARON* made his appearance. Baron had quit the stage for thirty years and returned to it again. On his leaving the stage the first time, his parting character was in this play, and on his leaving it the second time he again chose it for his last appearance.

And here we may, once for all, without derangement of our subject, give a few words to that admirable actor and extraordinary man, Michal Baron. He was born at the beautiful and romantic town of *Issoudun*, in the department of *Indre*, and on the river *Theols*: his father was a merchant, but he took to the stage. His powers of expressing the passions were so great that he was called the *Roscus* of his time. He excessively loved popularity, yet was lofty, proud and independent, and professionally so arrogant that he used to observe, that a *Cæsar* might arise once in a century, but that two thousand years were requisite to produce a Baron. For his superior excellence he was entirely indebted to his own exertions; so that Racine, when he was representing his *Andromache* to the actors, with the judgment of a poet and of a man of feeling, paid him the high compliment to say that he could not give him any instruction: for "your own heart," said he, "will tell you more than any lessons of mine can suggest." When Baron, at the conclusion of his second career, undertook to perform in *Vanceslas*, he was seventy years old, and had such an asthma that he could

scarcely speak. He was, however, entreated to perform; but had scarcely uttered twenty lines when he was obliged to quit the stage, which he did with these remarkable words:

Si proche du cercueil ou je me vois descendre.

It had been more dignified in Baron to have abstained from returning to the stage after his thirty years absence, being then very infirm: but he was so great a favourite with the public that they would have endured any thing from him. One evening, however, when he repeated the lines

Je suis jeune il est vrai: mais aux âmes bien nées
La valeur n'attend pas le nombre des années,—

they burst into an involuntary laugh. Baron, affecting to disregard the risible effect his pronunciation of the lines had upon the audience, gravely repeated the passage. This occasioned them to laugh more vehemently than before; upon which the old gentleman came forward and seriously addressed the parterre in these terms—"Gentlemen, I shall now begin for the third time; but if I hear any one laugh I shall quit the theatre immediately, never to return." This appeal so sensibly affected them that they took particular care not to offend him again; not but that they had still stronger motives to laughter, for when he was kneeling at the feet of his mistress and she desired him to rise, he was unable to get upon his legs again till two scene-shifters came on and helped him.

To return to Routrou. He was so evidently making a formidable stand against Corneille, that the latter felt the necessity of resorting to exertions of no ordinary kind, in order to maintain his superiority. In one year, therefore, he brought out three pieces:—*La Veuve*; *La Galerie de Palais*; and *La Suivante*; but without affecting the character and success of Routrou in any material degree, or in the least augmenting his own reputation. Of his last comedy (*La Suivante*) a French wit said that its principal merit was that the five acts were so exactly of a length that there was not a single line in any one, more than in either of the others. These discouraging events are supposed to have constituted Corneille's principal inducement for joining himself to the cardinal Richelieu and his disreputable confederacy: for it was the year next after

the appearance of *La Suivante* that the *Tuilleries* was performed—a play to which Corneille was known to have given his hand, as one of the five poets. With this league, so unworthy of him, Corneille appears to have been soon disgusted: for, as the cardinal and Corneille were at variance at the time the latter brought out his *Cid*, and as the *Cid* first appeared in 1636, it is evident to demonstration that Corneille's partnership with the coalition did not last, at the furthest, more than a year. That he never would have joined it at all but for the purpose of obtaining a liberal patron in Richelieu is probable. That he was disappointed in his views no one, who has a heart or understanding to appreciate the dignity of genius, will lament.

In the year 1635, Corneille brought out a comedy intitled *La Place Royale*, and a tragedy, the first he ever published, called *Medée*. Neither of these met with any extraordinary marks of approbation; yet early in the next year he produced a comedy called *L'Illusion*, of which he himself confesses that he wrote it merely to divert his mind from the gloomy thoughts occasioned by the fate of his *Medée*, and of which he candidly avowed that it deserved but little notice. All this time, Routrou, was indefatigably employed, and brought out half a dozen plays, among which was *L'Heureuse Naufrage*, a comedy, which was well received, as indeed were all of them.

While Routrou was thus apparently in the high road to first rate fame, the genius of Corneille burst out at once unexpectedly in a blaze which astonished the public, and struck Routrou's muse down to the earth. In two months after the appearance of *L'Illusion* came forth the *Cid*, which gave Corneille a complete triumph, and cast all his competitors at an immeasurable distance. Never did a tragedy possess more extraordinary attraction,—never did one meet with more success;—it was committed to memory by all who were capable of reading;—the very children were taught to lisp the most beautiful lines of it—and when any one was desirous to express, in the strongest terms possible, his sense of superior beauty and excellence in any thing, he did so by comparison with this play: "*beau comme le Cid*" being the customary expression.

While the *Cid* was overwhelmed, to an extent before unknown, with the applauses of the nation, and its author honoured with the congratulations of all the enlightened and honest men in France, a nest of poetical hornets, influenced by the cardinal, attacked his

piece with all the virulence which falsehood and malice could supply. The cardinal, it seems, had a vast appetite to be looked upon as the author of the *Cid*, and made overtures to Corneille to that effect. But that great poet, in conformity to the principle which should ever actuate men of genius, regarded genuine fame so much more than favour or emoluments, that he peremptorily, and with marks of contempt, rejected the proposal. Richelieu was not one of those who readily overlook a slight; nor could his haughty soul brook a repulse. That he who could command every one under the sovereign, and mould all France to his will, should be resisted in a wish of his, by a poor poet, was not to be forgiven; and he resolved that, since the play was not to pass for his, the success of it should be interrupted, and its reputation destroyed. He, therefore, contrived that the *Cid* should be carefully examined by the academy, and that their sentence upon its merits should be given to the public. Of the cooperation of his creatures in the academy he was certain; nor was he wrong when he laid his account with it. But, blinded as he was by pride and malice, he now perceived that the public thought very little of the opinion of the academy, and would ultimately judge for themselves. In compliance with the cardinal's desire, and in their zeal to oblige their patron, those honest members contrived to find nothing but faults in the *Cid*, and, above all, they charged that every rule of the drama was violated in that composition. To this charge the partisans of Corneille agreed, but insisted that the violation of those rules was productive of the greatest beauties; and from it they drew conclusions in favour of the *Cid*, in which the public feeling as well as the purest and most enlightened judgments concurred.

The fact is, that the play, though a marvellous fine production, has some glaring faults. The *Cid* was known and much celebrated long before Corneille. To a Spanish poet of the name of Guillim de Castro, he acknowledges that he owes it; and Fontenelle says that there was no nation, however barbarous, to which the *Cid* was unknown. To Corneille it was allotted to give it to the world in a polished form.

Had the glory, nay the existence of France, and the fate of all Europe been at stake, the cardinal could not have called forth his energies to meet the emergency with greater warmth and industry than he did on this occasion. It must have been a curious spectacle to behold the ardour with which his eminence entered

into the investigation of the merits and demerits of the play, the vast importance of which he considered it, the authoritative solemnity with which he handed it over to the academy for trial, and the hypocritical gravity with which that contemptible body sat down to deliberate upon it! And so despotic was the influence which their patron exercised over that contemptible body of men, that they all joined in passing sentence of condemnation on the *Cid*,—all but that very man who alone, if personal competition can be considered a palliation of injustice, would have been least unjustifiable in joining them. ROUTROU turned with scorn from the league, generously asserted the excellence of the play and maintained the great superiority of Corneille, as a dramatic poet, to all men existing. Such are the ennobling effects of real genius; and where those are wanting, it may reasonably be concluded that, whatever brilliance may meet the eye, it is little more than specious and superficial, and that at the bottom some ingredient material to the composition of exalted genius is wanting. Routrou had so long been considered as standing in a reputable degree of competition with Corneille, that he might reasonably be pardoned for imagining himself his equal. To be at once put down from that high station might have awakened jealousy and kindled animosity even in the bosom of a good man. How can we then enough praise the integrity of heart and nobleness of nature displayed by him in relation to the great object of his emulation, whom he not only zealously defended, but panegyricized in the most enthusiastic terms of praise and veneration, and publicly placed the palm upon his head, calling him his father, his instructor, and the first object of his reverential regards upon earth.—Heavens, how little—how minute and miserable appears the great cardinal Richelieu in this transaction, when compared with Routrou!—that Routrou, who was compelled to sell one of his best plays for perhaps a tenth part of its value to save himself from a jail.

It has been suggested that the principal cause of the cardinal's dislike to the *Cid* was of a political nature, and proceeded from certain exalted sentiments it contained, which coward conscience whispered in his eminence's ears were meant to expose the corrupt influence of his administration, and to satirize his injustice and his rapacity. In corroboration of this, the great caution he observed in the proceeding, and the cunning with which he ensconced himself behind others, while he carried on the attack against the *Cid*, are

mentioned, and indeed not without much plausibility of reasoning. He first made one of his poetical slaves (*Scudery*) abuse the *Cid*, and then, under a pretence of respect and friendship, got Boisrobert to represent to Corneille how advantageous it would be to him to hand his production over to the academy for an examination, which, as it would no doubt be highly favourable, could not fail to put an end to all clamours, and at once silence *Scudery* and all such libellers. Corneille was not at all at a loss to perceive the drift of the application, and drily returned for answer, that he would not attempt to oppose the *Cid*'s going before the academy, provided that body's passing judgment on it would afford his eminence the least amusement.

An answer so poignantly satirical would have made any man hesitate, who was not blinded by the most perverse malignity and pride; but on the cardinal it had no such effect. He, on the contrary, construed it into a full and voluntary consent on the part of Corneille. In consequence of which a committee was appointed to examine the *Cid*; and, the better to assume an appearance of impartiality, the attack of *Scudery* was also referred for examination to the committee. The report of the committee, and all the observations contained in it, were then debated in a full meeting of the academy: the debates upon the amendments proposed were long, and it was some time before that body came to a conclusion. But it so happened that the cardinal's cunning overshot the mark. As it is the nature of guilty men of every kind to keep their real motives concealed, his eminence was more reserved with his creatures of the academy than he ought to have been, and declined to instruct any of them with the particulars of his objections to the play. The consequence was that they ran headlong from one extreme to another; and instead of expunging or amending the faults, they expunged all the beauties, and thus rendered the objectionable parts still more striking. Having done this, they ordered it to be printed in the state to which they had reduced it, and the first sheet was sent to the cardinal for his opinion.

Richelieu, convinced that the public mind would revolt at the barbarous havoc committed by the academy, and that he himself would, in the end, be exposed, thought it expedient to limit his malice with a little prudence, and ordered the printing to be delayed till he revised the alterations; when, contenting himself

with a few inconsiderable alterations, to which, rather than go to open war with him, Corneille agreed, the piece was left in the state in which we see it at this day.

(To be continued.)

BIOGRAPHY.

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF WILLIAM WARREN,

Actor and Manager of the Philadelphia Theatre.

[Continued from page 221.]

THE building of the theatre, of which Davis was now to become manager, originated in a kind of civil feud. In many of the chief cities and corporate towns of Great Britain, the magistracy is regarded with jealousy and dislike by a considerable portion of the people, who generally constitute an opposition party, having its leaders, its orators, and its demagogues. In all free nations there exist multitudes intolerant of laws and power, and too often intolerant in proportion to their actual exemption from restraint. The municipal power exercised in the towns alluded to is, on several accounts, more odious in its nature, and, to the people, appears infinitely more vexatious than that exercised by the great national government. As the municipal magistrates, in general, are persons who have risen, by sordid occupations, from the lower classes of society, they are viewed with contempt and irreverence by their fellow citizens; and being for the same reason prone to exert their brief authority even to abuse, and to bolster up their personal meanness with excessive arrogance, they are very offensive in the discharge of their offices. The sordid habits of their antecedent lives, too, renders them rapacious; while ignorance, the result of a defective education, commits them to the tyranny of their own tempers, without a guide to direct them to the right, or reason to control them from going wrong. This is pretty nearly true of all the corporate towns in England, and is more particularly so of the episcopal sees, in which the civil authority, being originally intermingled with that of the church, or derived from it, still retains a

strong spice of ecclesiastical rigour and haughty despotism. Exeter is one of these, and yields to none of them in the vulgar ignorance of its corporate magistrates, or in the stupid, we might say fanatical, rigour of the execution of its municipal laws. In those parts of the suburbs therefore, to which the power of the mayor and corporation does not extend, a kind of warfare is maintained against them; and *Westout*, being out of the reach of the corporation of Exeter, was fixed upon as a proper place to set up a theatre in opposition to that in the city. Mr. Friar, a gentleman of consequence and great goodness, who was the leader of the party, was the principal promoter, and, by his influence, the chief support, of the new theatre. They opened with *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Waterman*; in which Warren played young Marlow and Bundle. Cross, lately of the Philadelphia theatre, performed the same night. As they had strong reinforcements pouring in upon them, their success exceeded their expectations, and the old established theatre felt the opposition severely. Nor was the mortification experienced by the opposite party confined to the theatre: the company joined their patrons in a hostility of another and more ludicrous kind. To ridicule the mayor and corporation of the city, they instituted a mock body which they called the corporation of *Westout*; the terms of admission to it were fixed at four pence, for which he who paid it received a tankard of beer. When the corporation of Exeter went to the play, the corporation of *Westout* went also and took the opposite side of the house, and, in short, kept up a mock emulation of them in every thing. Nay, as the former had their contested elections, the latter had their contested elections also. For the office of *Mayor of Westout* two candidates were started; a mock contest was carried on with great spirit and much merriment; both candidates retained counsel, who, in their arguments and scuffles, caricatured the proceedings of the Exeter corporation. Warren particularly remembers that *Itinerant RYLEY* was retained by one of them; and that, dressed in a gown and big wig, he excited much mirth with the wit and humour of his pleadings before the mock court, which was held at a public house called the Green Tree, in St. Thomas's, otherwise *Westout*.

The company went on swimmingly for a few weeks, when unfortunately Mr. Friar was suddenly taken ill: his life was despaired of, and in him the company lost their main prop. His influence kept the people alive to the interests of the new theatre; and when that

ceased to operate, the people flagged in their attention and gradually fell off. Nevertheless, the company kept on playing, though not so successfully, yet with a sufficiency for support, which seems to have been the utmost extent of their hopes or wishes.

While they were thus getting on, Warren was again visited by his old pest (Biggs) who called upon him for his customary purpose; and, meeting him by accident at an ordinary, where Warren usually dined, began to abuse him with every foul epithet which his perfect skill in blackguardism could supply. Though naturally pacific, Warren lost all patience; yet being unwilling to strike a man so much elder than himself, he took a tobacco pipe from the table and broke it over the fellow's head. This was enough for Biggs, who immediately sallied forth, and returned soon after with a summons for Warren, and another for Woolley, who had actually done nothing at all, to appear before a magistrate for an assault and battery. The justices were at the time sitting at the courthouse at Norney,* and our two young heroes were brought before them, attended, as before, by Davis, who greatly piqued himself upon his legal knowledge, argumentative powers and eloquence, and resolved to exercise them in behalf of his young friends, not in the least doubting that he would be able to make the court feel and admire the force of his talents.

It happened that the presiding magistrate was just that kind of a man on whom even mighty Davis's powers of persuasion or reasoning could make no sort of impression. His name was C—r—n, and a more hard, crabbed, crossgrained, selfwilled and impracticable fraction of magistracy never sat on a bench in any country. He knew Burns's Justice indifferently well; but, from natural taste as well as long habit, he was most deeply versed in those parts which arm justices with scourges for the unfortunate part of the community;—he had the vagrant acts all by heart;—was an adept in discussing knotty points in the poor-laws;—knew as well as any one how to make a young booby go for a soldier by way of making amends for burdening the community with a child, and could then, with dexterity, upon the frail mother's oath, father the child on some person able to maintain it, who perhaps never saw either one

* A part of Exeter, so called in abbreviation of Northernny, being at the north of the city, as Southernny, on the opposite side, is also abbreviated to Sowney.

or the other;—no justice knew better how to deal with gypsies;—and as for actors, he had as rancorous an aversion to them as ever fanaticism begat upon stupid pride. Before this gracious personage did Biggs charge William Warren with having assaulted him the said Biggs and putting him in fear of his life, in breach of the king's peace, and contrary to the statutes in that case made and provided. Davis attempted to speak; but Davis was silenced by the bench. Warren requested to be heard, and muttered something about a tobacco pipe: but the bench ordered him to hold his tongue. After having heard out the long story of Biggs, which though it was as false as the devil could make it, with all the complacency imaginable, C—r—n turned to Warren and interrogated him with great severity: "And pray what have you to say for yourself?—what are you?"—To this Biggs interposing replied, "why, please your honour, he's a strolling player!"—"A strolling player indeed!" exclaimed C—r—n,—"Oho, Mr. strolling player! I think we shall"—"Yes, sir," said Warren resolutely, "I am a strolling player, nor do I see why I should be ashamed of being one, so long as I deport myself like an honest man: but pray, sir, have the goodness to ask my accuser what he is."—"What is your profession, sir?" said C—r—n very respectfully to Biggs. "Since he has answered for me," said Warren, "I will answer for him: he is a strolling manager!"—"What, have I been listening to an actor all this time?" said C—r—n, starting up in surprise and indignation; "what! both parties players?—all players?—all players?—Get you gone!—away with you all!—get you gone, I say, one and all; and let me hear no more of you. Away, away, I say, or I'll so make you hear of it." Here Biggs, after making twenty bows of submission to the worshipful bench, stumped as fast as he could out of court: and Warren, Woolley and Davis, after waiting to see him out, and, instead of bowing to the bench, laughing heartily at Biggs, left Norney and returned to Westout. As this adventure sickened Biggs with any further attempts of the same kind, Warren never saw him afterwards.

And here it may not be amiss to advert retrospectively to some incidents which show the illiberal haughtiness and contempt with which the sons of the sock and buskin are treated by many people in England, who ought to be incapable of harbouring such unworthy sentiments. When Mr. Kemble went to the marquis of Salisbury (lord chamberlain) upon some important concerns respecting the

theatre, his lordship, after the business was over, with his *accustomed condescension and good nature*, told that respectable gentleman, that if he chose to take any refreshment, a servant should be ordered to conduct him to *the butler's room*. And Warren relates an incident of nearly the same kind that occurred when he was playing in Jefferson's company at Totness, but which we accidentally omitted.

A Mr. Carey, a person of high rank, who resided, and probably yet resides, at a place called Tor-Abbey, in Devonshire, being about to celebrate some domestic festival, applied to Mr. Jefferson to bring his people to the abbey to perform a play, for which he agreed to advance an adequate reward. Accordingly the whole company attended their manager thither, some in coaches and postchaises, some in gigs, and some on horseback; but, for the propriety of the thing, none on this important occasion went on foot. They all very naturally laid their account with being hospitably treated, and received with decency and respect. What must have been their mortification then to be shown, immediately on their arrival, into the *Servant's Hall*, where a table was laid for them to dine at! Mr. Jefferson sent to Mr. Carey to remonstrate on this indignity: however the company, one and all, dismissing every personal consideration touching themselves, resented very warmly the insult to their much beloved and respected manager, and, putting him into a carriage, sent him off, resolved that, whatever indignity might be offered to the corps, he should touch no share of it. As for themselves, they prepared to play; but in the most peremptory manner refused either to eat or drink, till Mr. Carey came in person, apologized handsomely for his remissness, and ordered them an elegant room, where they fared sumptuously. After which they had spirits to perform the *School for Scandal* and the *Agreeable Surprise* to Mr. Carey's satisfaction.

The theatre at Westout continued to be occasionally opened for a considerable length of time, with various degrees of success: the greatest however not sufficient to afford a young actor any reasonable inducement to remain in the company. At last they were all reduced to their old plight, and were sorely pinched by distress. This consideration, together with the recollection of the many disagreeable circumstances attendant upon the life of an itinerant performer, against which no human prudence could provide, and from which no integrity or innocence could serve as a shield,

began heavily to weigh on our hero's mind, and to make a deep impression on his feelings. He had already undergone all the inconveniences incident to the calling: but for the beneficence of his parents, he must sometimes have experienced poverty in its most intolerable shape, hunger; he saw that the prejudices of a large portion of society were against the character of a player;—that the dispensers of justice themselves were so warped whenever they came in contact with an actor, that innocence was not always a surety for protection; and that the profession, in that rank in which it was his fate hitherto to move, was laborious without profit, and unprofitable without fame; that so long as he continued to associate with such persons as those in whose fortunes he had hitherto shared, there would be no chance whatever of his emerging from wretchedness and obscurity; but that he must drudge on through a wearisome painful life, and at the end perhaps die like an old post horse, in the harness. Indeed what could he hope, seeing, as he constantly did, so much penury around him, and at the same time so much ignorance and incapacity in many of his associates, with so little talent in any of them, that it seemed contrary to the nature of things that they should succeed in any such profession; so that he had every day additional cause rather to wonder at their being able to live than to be surprised at the distresses under which they so frequently laboured. Of the ignorance of some of the unfortunates who contrived to find their way to the stage, our friend mentions a singular instance in the person of a wine-cooper of Exeter, who took it into his precious noddle to become an actor, and was received by Mr. Davis. Mr. Pullen, for that was the gentleman's name, being appointed to perform the character of *Grey*, in *The Chapter of Accidents*, when he came to that affecting part in the denouement, in which *Cecilia's* fame is cleared up, and *Grey* along with the rest congratulates her upon it, instead of saying "Rise, my glorious girl! rise, *purified* and forgiven," said "Rise, my glorious girl—rise, *PUTREFIED* and forgiven," without being at all sensible of the absurdity of his error.

While Warren was ruminating with no very pleasing sensations on the best measures to pursue, he received a letter from his father requesting him to return home. This determined him in one respect. He resolved to go home; but was far from thinking to quit the stage. He had more substantial grounds than his own bare opinion for concluding that he was not without considerable talents

for the profession, for that was admitted by every one: yet when he reflected that they had never been tested by comparison with players of any eminence, he was not quite free from doubts upon that point. Something however he knew he possessed which would go a great way towards forwarding him: with industry, temperance, and quickness of study, he knew he was well furnished by habit as well as by nature; and these would, at all events, secure him in the end a respectable establishment: he, therefore, resolved at once to leave Davis and go home, from whence he could look out at leisure, and perhaps, in no long time, get a place in a respectable company of players; in which should he fail of success, he was determined to abandon the stage for ever, and leave it with the loss of two years and five months of his time which he had wasted in strolling.

His resolution being formed, Warren fixed on a day for his departure, and was joined by a person of the name of Snagg, an inhabitant of the city of Bath, who, being on his return home, agreed to bear him company in the journey, which was no less a distance than eighty-six miles.—When the morning arrived for their departure, they found that they must either encounter a very heavy fall of snow or postpone their journey; which last the slender state of their finances forbade: they were therefore fain to set off in the height of the storm; and, as they expended some time in visiting and bidding adieu to friends, it was eleven o'clock before they reached Cullompton, where they stopped for a time to rest and take some refreshment. As they were upon the point of setting out, a returned chaise presented itself going to Taunton, the driver of which agreed to take them there for a trifle. Snagg got so drunk on the road that the motion of the chaise put him to sleep, and the driver himself got so inebriated that he was unable to hold the rein; so that Warren was obliged to cram him into the carriage with Snagg, and to take the office of driver on himself. With the various delays occasioned by the misbehaviour of those two fellows, it was nine o'clock at night before they arrived at Taunton, where Warren helped Snagg to go to a house, at which he was known, and there having put him to bed, went himself to take his supper with an old friend; after which he returned to the inn where the chaise stopped, got a bed for the night, and slept as sweetly as if the dawning of the next day was to light him to a princely fortune.

The joint stock of our two travellers for defraying the expenses of their journey from Exeter to Bath was a guinea, or *twenty-one shillings* sterling. This scanty provision demanded not only speedy travelling, but strict frugality. Warren, therefore, rose by the break of day, to be on the road as soon as possible, and wakened Snagg, who also rose; but—think, reader—imagine if you possibly can, what must have been their consternation, when, on drawing on his clothes, Snagg found that the whole of the money which he, as cash-keeper for both, had in his pocket, was gone! Dreary indeed was their prospect: they had yet fifty-two miles to travel; the day was cold and raw; the roads were thickly covered with snow—and of their whole stock, there remained but *four shillings*, which was in the pocket of our friend. They were moreover out of all reach of assistance; for if there were any idea more extravagant, or any thing more impossible than all others, it would be that of a strolling player's getting any one to lend him money in that country. As there was no mode whatever for the lost cash to get away, but by its rolling out of Snagg's pocket as he lay drunk in the carriage, Warren proposed to resort to the driver and beg of him to search the chaise, or, if he had found the money, to call upon him to restore it. The driver, however, arriving at the moment, saved them all further trouble of debating the matter by demanding his fare, and by declaring, on being questioned touching the lost money, and confirming the declaration with a thundering oath, that he had swept out the chaise, and that there was nothing in it more than usual. Had he been ever so much disposed to believe the fellow, his manner would have confirmed Warren in the suspicion, that he had either found the cash in his sweeping, or purloined it out of Snagg's pocket; for he told them that they might have their ride for nothing, and seemed well pleased when they gave the matter up: at the same time our poor travellers were afraid to make a noise about it, lest it should lead to a charge on the part of the driver, and to a suspicion in all who heard it, that their loss was a pretext formed to shuffle off the payment of his fare for carrying them. They were, therefore, fain to put up with it and push forward as well as they could on their journey—a difficult undertaking, since of the four shillings which remained in Warren's pocket, two being demanded for his lodging for the night, no more than two were left to defray their expenses.

As every moment's delay would enhance their difficulties, Warren urged his fellow traveller to be gone, and they set off with their best speed on the road to Bridgwater; but on the way the sole of one of Snagg's boots ripped off; and as they had neither time nor cash to spare for getting it stitched together again, they stopped at a cottage, borrowed a knife, and cut it entirely off. By way of consoling Warren, and cajoling himself with a modicum of hope, whether false or well founded, Snagg assured his companion that he knew where they would get relief: "You mayn't think it, perhaps," said he, "but I can tell you that I have a friend at Bridgwater, that's very well to live in the world; and you'll see, you'll see what a fine dinner we shall have there!" Entering Bridgwater, Mr. Snagg conducted his fellow traveller to this house of promised hospitality, where they found only an old woman, whose best cheer was a slice of cheese and bread and some beer. Not one article of these was good; however for it, such as it was, Mr. Snagg's friend insisted on being paid one shilling!! Snagg affected surprise and mortification: but Warren was seriously angry with him;—and well he might, for this payment left them but six pence for the residue of their journey.

Much lighter in pocket than in heart, our poor adventurers again proceeded to make the best of their way; Warren intending to push on to Bath without stopping. It was no less than thirty miles to be sure—a long walk to take between dinner and bedtime—but he recollected that he had once, upon an occasion still less urgent, walked from Bath to Sherborn, which was forty-three miles, between breakfast and dinner. Snagg, however, hung upon him like a log upon a mastiff's neck, and retarded his progress. Though he could *do* nothing, he *said* every thing he could think of to keep Warren in good humour and reconcile him to his deplorable situation, as they walked on towards Glastonbury. "I'll tell you what it is, Warren," said this comfortable companion; "but what signifies my telling you, when—damn that old witch for making a liar of me—I know you'll not believe it."—"That I shan't if it be good, you may depend upon it," said Warren; "your promises are like pie-crusts, only made to be broken—nay, not half so good; for they end in rotten cheese, brown bread and sour beer, with a swinging charge at the end of them."—"Nay, now but hear me this once," said Snagg, "and if I fail, why never believe me again. At Shepton Mallet I have a friend—a real friend—it will delight

you to see how rejoiced he and his wife, and his children, and every one in his house—ay, the servants, and the very dogs, will be to see me. Good souls! whenever I go there, they cluster about me; and the first thing they do is to make me eat and drink till I'm ready to burst;—but you shall see, you shall see:—there we shall get a comfortable hot supper and good bed, and a nice breakfast before we set out, after taking a good night's rest—ay, and money, if need be, to help us on to Bath in the morning in the stage—snug, boy, snug. But hark you, Warren," (they were then just entering Glastonbury) "suppose we stop here and have a mouthful—eh!—what say you?—that six pence you have got!—just enough—the nicest thing in the world—exactly enough—and then we shall have strength and spirits to dash on the rest of the way, and arrive just in time to supper at my friend's at Shepton Mallet." "Your friend!" exclaimed Warren, who could not help being diverted with the earnestness of Snagg's solicitation, and wanted to tantalize him: "your friend! I'll lay my life it will be another cheese and bread adventure; but remember—we have nothing now to pay for it; so if any thing of that kind happens, you must answer for it." "Done with you," said Snagg, "so now let us come into this ale-house before us here and take something."—"Well, be it so," replied our friend, laughing—"here it goes! the last six pence! !"

Having discussed that poor remnant of his cash in bread and beer, Warren with his companion pushed on to the town of Shepton Mallet, where Snagg brought him to the house of his friend, where their reception was little better than it had been at his other friend's, at Bridgwater. The family were gone (all but the man's old mother) to spend the christmas holidays at Wells. As it was now rather late, very dark, extremely cold, the ground covered with snow, the roads dangerous, and the young men evidently fatigued, the old sibyl who guarded the house agreed to let them stay for the night, gave them for supper something so very bad that they could scarcely eat it, beer almost turned to alegar—and, to repose in, a bed so short that they were almost frozen to death. However the prospect of home cheered Warren. In the morning he rose betimes, and reached Bath that day, being the day of universal festivity and good cheer in England, *Christmas day*. There, in the arms of his parents and family, by a blazing fire, and, according to British custom, with a dinner of roast beef and plumb pudding, he gave all remembrance of past sorrows and sufferings to the winds.

With this, the third sally of our knight, ended the distressed part of his life. We shall next have to accompany him through fortunes which, being more propitious, were less marked with the kind of adventure that has enabled us to hold up to our readers so true a picture of the miserable state of strolling players in England.

(To be continued.)

MEMOIRS OF JAMES QUIN.

The celebrated Comedian.

JAMES QUIN was born in King-street, Covent-garden, Feb. 24th, 1693. The ancestors of Mr. Quin were of an ancient family in the kingdom of Ireland. His father, James Quin, was bred at Trinity-college, Dublin, from whence he came to England, entered himself of Lincoln's-inn, and was called to the bar; but his father, Mark Quin, who had been Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1676, dying about that period, and leaving him an ample estate, he quitted England in 1701 for his native country. His marriage was attended with circumstances which affected the interest of his son so materially, as probably to influence his future destination in life. His mother was a reputed widow, who had been married to a person in the mercantile line, and who left her, to pursue some traffic or particular business in the West Indies. He had been absent from her near seven years without her having received any letter from, or the least information about him. He was even given out to be dead, which report was universally credited. She went into mourning for him; and some time after, Mr. Quin's father, who is said to have then possessed an estate of 1000*l.* a year, paid his addresses to her, and married her. The consequence of this marriage was Mr. Quin: his parents continued for some time in an undisturbed state of happiness, when the first husband returned, claimed his wife, and had her. Mr. Quin the elder retired with his son, to whom he is said to have left his property.

Another, and more probable account is, that the estate was suffered to descend to the heir at law, and the illegitimacy of Mr. Quin being proved, he was dispossessed of it, and left to shift for himself. He received his education at Dublin, under the care of Dr. James, until the death of his father in 1710, when the progress of it was interrupted by the litigations which arose about his estate.

It is generally admitted, that he was deficient in literature; and it has been said, that he laughed at those who read books by way of inquiry after knowledge, saying that he read men—that the world was the best book. This account is believed to be founded in truth, and will prove the great strength of his natural understanding, which enabled him to establish so considerable a reputation as a man of sense and genius. Deprived thus of the property he expected, and with no profession to support him, though he is said to have been intended for the law, Mr. Quin had nothing to rely upon but the exercise of his talents, and with these he soon supplied the deficiencies of fortune.

The theatre in Dublin was then struggling for an establishment, and there he made his first essay. The part he performed was Abel, in the Committee, in 1714; and he represented a few other characters, as Cleon, in Timon of Athens; Prince of Tanais, in Tamerlane, and others, but all of equal insignificance. After performing one season in Dublin, he was advised by Chetwood, the prompter, not to smother his rising genius in a kingdom where there was no great encouragement for merit. This advice he adopted, and came to London, where he was immediately received into the company at Drury-lane. It may be proper here to mention, that he repaid the friendship of Chetwood, by a recommendation which enabled that gentleman to follow him to the metropolis. At that period it was usual for young actors to perform inferior characters, and to rise in the theatre as they displayed skill and improvement. In conformity to this practice, the parts which Mr. Quin had allotted to him were not calculated to procure much celebrity. He performed the lieutenant of the Tower, in Rowe's Lady Jane Grey; the steward, in Gay's What-d'ye-call-it; and Vulture, in The Country Lasses; all acted in 1715. In December 1716, he performed a part of more consequence, that of Antenor, in Mrs. Centlivre's Cruel Gift; but in the beginning of the next year we find him degraded to speak about a dozen lines in the character of the second player, in Three Hours after Marriage. Accident, however, had just before procured him an opportunity of displaying his talents, which he did not neglect.

An order had been sent from the lord chamberlain to revive the play of Tamerlane for the 4th of November, 1716. It had accordingly been got up with great magnificence. On the third night, Mr. Mills, who performed Bajazet, was suddenly taken ill, and

application was made to Mr. Quin to read the part; a task which he executed so much to the satisfaction of the audience, that he received a considerable share of applause. The next night he made himself perfect, and performed it with redoubled proofs of approbation. On this occasion he was complimented by several persons of distinction and dramatic taste, upon his early rising genius. It does not appear that he derived any other advantage at that time from his success.

Impatient therefore of his situation, and dissatisfied with his employers, he determined upon trying his fortune at Mr. Rich's theatre, at Lincoln's-inn Fields, then under the management of Messrs. Keene and Christopher Bullock, and accordingly in 1717, quitted Drury-lane, after remaining there two seasons. He continued at this theatre seventeen years, and during that period, supported with credit, the same characters which were then admirably performed at the rival theatre. Soon after he quitted Drury-lane, an unfortunate transaction took place, which threatened to interrupt, if not entirely to stop his theatrical pursuits; and which evinces that jealousy and rancour which are too prevalent in the theatrical world. This was an unlucky encounter between him and Mr. Bowen, which ended fatally for the latter. From the evidence given at the trial, it appeared that on the 17th of April, 1718, about four or five o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Bowen and Mr. Quin met accidentally at the Fleece tavern, in Cornhill. They drank together in a friendly manner, and jested with each other for some time, until their conversation turned on their performance on the stage. Bowen said, that Quin had acted Tamerlane in a loose sort of manner; and Quin in reply observed, that his opponent had no occasion to value himself on his performance, since Mr. Johnson, who had but seldom acted it, represented Jacomo, in the *Libertine*, as well as he who had acted it often. These observations, probably, irritated them both, and the conversation changed to another subject, not better calculated to produce good humour—the honesty of each party. In the course of the altercation, Bowen asserted that he was as honest a man as any in the world, which occasioned a story about his political tenets to be introduced by Quin; and both parties being warm, a wager was laid on the subject, which was determined in favour of Quin, on his relating that Bowen sometimes drank to the health of the Duke of Ormond, and sometimes refused it; at the same time asking the referee, how he could be

as honest a man as any in the world, who acted upon two different principles? The gentleman who acted as umpire, then told Mr. Bowen, that if he insisted upon his claim to be as honest a man as any in the world, he must give it against him.

Here the dispute seemed to have ended, nothing in the rest of the conversation indicating any remains of resentment in either party. Soon afterwards, however, Mr. Bowen arose, threw down some money for his reckoning, and left the company. In about a quarter of an hour Mr. Quin was called out by a porter sent by Bowen; and both Quin and Bowen went together, first to the Swan tavern, and then to the Pope's-Head tavern, where a rencounter took place; in which Bowen received a wound, of which he died on the 20th of April following. In the course of the evidence it was sworn, that Bowen, after he had received the wound, declared that justice had been done to him; that there had been nothing but fair play, and, if he died, he freely forgave his antagonist. On this evidence Mr. Quin was, on the 10th of July, found guilty of manslaughter only, and soon after returned to his employment on the stage.

Another accident of a similar nature happened to him, and likewise his friend, Ryan. The theatre, in which Mr. Quin was at this time established, had not the patronage of the public in any degree equal to its rival at Drury-lane; nor had it the good fortune to acquire those advantages which fashion liberally confers on its favourites, until several years after. The performances, however, though not equal to those of Drury-lane, were far from deserving censure. In the season of 1718-19, Mr. Quin performed in Buckingham's *Scipio Africanus*; and in 1719-20 *Sir Walter Raleigh*; and in the same year had two benefits: *The Provoked Wife*, on January 31st, before any other performer; and *The Squire of Alsatia*, on April 17th. The succeeding season he performed in Buckingham's *Henry IV. of France*; in *Richard II.* and *The Imperial Captives*. The season of 1720-21 was very favourable to his reputation as an actor. October 29th *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was revived, in which he first played *Falstaff*, with great increase of fame. This play, which was well supported by Ryan, in *Ford*; Spiller, in *Doctor Caius*; Boheme, in *Justice Shallow*; and Griffin, in *Sir Hugh Evans*, was acted nineteen times during the season; a proof that it made a very favourable impression on the public.

On the revival of *Every Man in his Humour*, in 1724-5, he re-

presented old Knowell; and it is not unworthy of observation, that Kitley, afterwards so admirably performed by Mr. Garrick, was assigned to Mr. Hippisley, the Shuter or Edwin of his day.

At this time Lincoln's-inn Fields theatre had, by the assistance of some pantomimes, been more frequented than at any time since it was opened. January 29, 1728, The Beggar's Opera was acted for the first time. It is said that when Gay showed this performance to his patron, the Duke of Queensberry, his Grace's observation was, "This is a very odd thing, Gay;—it is either a very good thing, or a bad thing." It proved the former beyond the warmest expectation of the author or his friends; though Quin, whose knowledge of the public taste cannot be questioned, was so doubtful of its success, that he cheerfully resigned the part of Macheath. It was performed with the most astonishing success. Two years afterwards, March 19th, 1729-30, Quin had the Beggar's Opera for his benefit, and performed the part of Macheath himself, when he received the sum of 206*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.* which were several pounds more than the common prices had produced any one night at that theatre; for the highest receipt during the run of the Beggar's Opera was 198*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* His benefit the preceding year brought him only 102*l.* 18*s.*; and the succeeding only 129*l.* 3*s.*

December 7th, 1732, Covent-garden theatre was opened, and the company belonging to Lincoln's-inn Fields removed thither. The play was The Way of the World: pit and boxes 5*s.* each. So little attraction, however, had the new theatre, that the receipt of the house amounted but to 115*l.* In the course of this season Mr. Quin was called upon to exercise his talents in singing, and accordingly performed Lycomedes, in Gay's posthumous opera of Achilles, eighteen nights.

The next season concluded his service at Covent-garden; and in the beginning of the season 1734-5, he removed to the rival theatre, Drury-lane, on such terms as no hired actor had before received. During Mr. Quin's connexion with Mr. Rich, he was employed, or at least consulted, in the conduct of the theatre by his principal, as a kind of deputy-manager. While in this situation he had a whole heap of plays brought him, which he put in a drawer in his bureau. An author had given him a play behind the scenes, which probably he lost or mislaid, not troubling his head about it. Two or three days after, *Mr. Bayes* waited on him to know how he liked his play: Quin made some excuse for its not being received,

and the author desired to have it returned. "There," says Quin, "there it lies, on that table." The author took up a play that was lying on the table, but on opening, found it was a tragedy, and told Quin of his mistake. "Faith, then, Sir," said he, "I have lost your play." "Lost my play!" cries the bard. "Yes, by G—, I have," answered the tragedian; "but there is a drawer full of comedies and tragedies, take any two you will in the room of it." The poet left him in high dudgeon, and the hero stalked across the room to his Spa-water and Rhenish, with a negligent felicity.

From the time of Mr. Quin's establishment at Drury lane until the appearance of Mr. Garrick, in 1741, he was generally allowed the foremost rank in his profession. The elder Mills, who succeeded Booth, was declining; and Milward, an actor of some merit, had not risen to the height of his excellence, which however, was not, at best very great; and Boheme was dead. His only competitor seems to have been Delane, whose merits were lost in indolent indulgence. He was a young tragedian from Dublin, who made his first appearance in London, at Goodman's-fields. Novelty, youth, and a handsome figure, took off from any severe criticism on his elocution and action. In short, though so far from the fashionable end of the town, he drew to him several polite audiences, and became in such a degree of repute, that comparisons were made between him and Quin; nor was he without his admirers of both sexes, who gave him the preference. He was not insensible of this, and determined to leave Goodman's-fields, and indulge his ambition at one of the theatres royal. He engaged with Mr. Rich at Covent-garden, about the time that Quin left it; and in two or three years gained that station which most of the other actors could not attain in many years. He was esteemed a just player, yet was remarkable for his violence of voice, which especially in Alexander, pleased many; for the million, as Colley Cibber says, are apt to be transported when the drum of the ear is soundly rattled. But, on the contrary, Quin's solemn sameness of pronunciation, which conveyed an awful dignity, was charmingly affecting in Cato.

Delane was young enough to rise to great perfection; Quin was then at the height of his: if Delane had the more pleasing person Quin had the more affecting action; both might have appeared with greater advantage, if they had been on the same stage. They were the Cæsar and Pompey of the theatres; and one stage would have

been incompatible with their ambition: Quin could bear no one on the footing of an equal—Delane no one as a superior. In the year 1745, Aaron Hill, in a periodical paper, called *The Prompter*, attacked some of the principal actors of the stage, and particularly Colley Cibber and Mr. Quin. Cibber, according to custom, laughed, but Quin was angry; and waited on Mr. Hill; a quarrel ensued between them, which ended in the exchange of a few blows. Mr. Quin was scarcely settled at Drury-lane before he became embroiled in a dispute relative to Monsieur Poitier and Madame Roland, then two celebrated dancers, for whose neglect of duty it had fallen to his lot to apologize. It was intimated in the papers, that Quin had with malice accused these dancers; but the manager, Fleetwood, by an advertisement, declared that Quin had acted in this affair in his behalf, and with the strictest regard to truth and justice. No further notice was taken of the business, and soon afterwards the delinquent dancers made their apology to the public, and were received into favour.

(To be continued.)

MISCELLANY.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM WINDHAM.

WE think there are few of our readers who will not forgive—we are sure that the far greater number of them will thank us, for the following short observations on a person who, when living, was the glory of his country and an honour to the whole human race; and whose character, now that he is dead, may be held up as one of the most admirable models which any age or country has produced, for the imitation of those who wish to be truly illustrious. As a piece of eloquence, animated yet unaffected—vigorous and affluent, yet concise and perspicuous, this sketch of the great statesman it alludes to, may be put in successful competition with the very best specimens furnished by “*The Edinburgh Review*,” from which it is extracted. The writer, indeed, seems to have been raised above his ordinary standard by the elevated nature of his subject, and his eloquence to have derived additional grandeur and truth from its contact with the very name of WINDHAM.

It appears that a bill having been brought into parliament for a change in the mode of representation, Mr. Windnam, on the 26th of May, 1809, made, in opposition to it, a very able speech, which, being published, came under the consideration of the Edinburgh Reviewers, who, in the preliminary observations to their criticism on it, gave the following character of that illustrious personage.

“ The speech before us is not only the production of one of the
“ finest geniuses, and most honourable men that the world ever
“ saw, but it is almost the latest memorial by which his splendid
“ talents and manly virtues have left themselves to be remember-
“ ed. The age which has witnessed the eclipse of the ancient splen-
“ dor and independence of Europe, seems also to be that in which
“ the heroic age of England is doomed to become extinct and to
“ perish. The mighty minds of Burke and Fox and Pitt and Nelson
“ have been withdrawn, in our own times, from the degraded scene
“ of our affairs,—and almost the last star in that great constellation
“ set at the death of Mr. Windham,—a death which has deprived
“ his country of its most perfect model of a gentleman, and left
“ both friends and enemies to deplore that generous and romantic
“ gallantry of feeling, which gave a certain chivalrous elevation
“ to all his views and acting,—those beautiful accomplishments
“ which embellished the whole society in which he lived,—that fine
“ and graceful wit, which fascinated those who were the most ad-
“ verse to his principles, and bound, as with a spell, the very men
“ who were the most aware of its seductions,—that hightempered
“ honour and unsullied purity, which were never questioned even
“ by the calumniating zealots of reform, and emerged unspotted
“ even from their monstrous alliance with the creatures of corrup-
“ tion. A better opportunity, we hope, will soon arise, for attempt-
“ ing to delineate the intellectual character of this extraordinary
“ person. But it is not without its use, even at present, to dwell a
“ little upon some of its most singular features; on the strange
“ opposition which seemed occasionally to subsist between his
“ genius and opinions—his principles and his prejudices. It is an
“ act, indeed, of essential justice to the public to endeavour to
“ counteract any errors that may have been spread abroad under
“ the sanction of that respected name;—to prescribe bounds to an
“ admiration, which can only be carried to excess when it con-
“ founds his character and his accomplishments with his tenets,—
“ and, above all, to unmask the mean arts of those priests of cor-

“ruption, who would trick out their idol in his mantle, and shield themselves behind the authority of one who was not their bitterest enemy only because he could not be persuaded to believe in their integrity,—who of all the men that ever lived in the world of politics, viewed public profligacy, and every sort of baseness, with the greatest loathing and abhorrence.”

We are free to avow our heartfelt love and veneration for the illustrious name of Windham,—a love and a veneration which neither lapse of time, nor change of circumstances, can possibly impair, being first built on the adamant foundation of that great man's exalted virtues and talents; and afterwards cemented by gratitude for honours and benefits, of which to be ever unmindful, would be profligacy beyond the largest measure of allowance which human charity can be expected to make for human wickedness.

Of attachment to such a man, independent of all personal feelings, who is he that need be ashamed?—Rather indeed what man, having pretensions to taste, but must be ashamed not to admire those astonishing mental powers,—that splendid yet robust wit, which could, at will, transform itself from the most fascinating playfulness, to the keenest satire,—those uncommon reasoning faculties,—that penetration, sagacity and prescience bordering on inspiration,—that deep knowledge in all the sciences,—that immense range of critical erudition, and all the other accomplishments, which drew, from one of the most learned men that ever lived, an application to Mr. Windham of these beautiful lines of the poet:

Ingenium cui diis, et mens contermina cœlo
Cuncta unus, cunctos unus erat.

If we mistake not, it is Quintilian who, speaking of Tully, says “*ille se multum in literis proficisse sciat, cui Cicero valde placuerit.*” It might seem to argue vanity therefore, and look like the affectation of a degree of learning, to which we are not weak enough to aspire, if we were to rest our admiration of Mr. Windham on his superior intellectual endowments. In their vast extent, they were far out of the reach of any but the most profoundly learned. Not so his virtues:—These even he himself could not but know. His stern integrity,—his high and unsullied honour,—his disinterestedness and magnanimity,—his purity, for an equal to him in which we should in vain search through the records of ancient

and modern times, may surely be admired and eulogized by us who have witnessed their exercise and experienced their effects, when they have extorted acknowledgment from his political opponents, and praise even from his enemies. Yet did those rancorous jugglers with truth, as incapable of estimating his value as of looking with open eyes at the blaze of the noonday sun, endeavour to dim the lustre which they could not obscure, by hinting that his virtues were carried too far; and, being afraid to say any thing worse of him, called him *inflexible, severe, a stoic, a Cato*, and jargon of that kind, whereby they wilfully sunk what was well understood by all who knew him—namely, that he was as mild as he was firm, and that, that very heart which nature had qualified to purge a commonwealth with the address of a Solon and the inflexibility of a Lycurgus,—to thunder in the field of war, or carry destruction through the armed fleets of enemies, if called to it by his country's good, or the felicity of the human race, was alive to all the finer feelings, filled brimful and over, with the tender charities, and possessed, to an eminent extent, of the several virtues (in no other man perhaps ever united) which, in their public exercise, serve to protect mankind, and in their private to be a comfort and a blessing to those who come within their influence—all, in a gentle gradation, according to the objects to which they were applicable, shaded imperceptibly from the strict and rugged discipline of inexorable justice, down through the manly kindnesses, to those softer sympathies which honour the gentler sex, and even to the playful simplicity of the child. Such was WILLIAM WINDHAM!!—But enough!—the subject grows too big for us—we must drop it!—Farewel then, great and glorious being!—Be thou blest, even as thou hast blessed!—Accept, from one of the multitude whose lives expended in tears for thy loss would not half pay the debt they owe thee,—accept this poor tribute;—poor—but genuine, and not the last:—No, never the last, while one beat more of life remains to this heart.

Jamque dies, ni fallor, adest quem semper acerbum
Semper honoratum, sic dii voluistis, habebo.

FOR THE MIRROR OF TASTE.

You doubtless imagine, Mr. Editor, that I am sadly mortified at the contempt manifested by the public, on reading my last communication. Far different are my sensations I assure you: I know too well the ordinary fates of genius, to suffer impressions so derogatory to its dignity. Milton's immortal poem, his *Paradise Lost*, was never regarded with reverence until his death, and from that hour to this, it has been considered as the standard of English epic. Shakspeare never dreamed of the popularity his plays were destined to obtain. The death of their author put the seal of immortality upon them. In like manner I sit, and with vast satisfaction contemplate how avaricious posterity will be to read and to admire the profound lucubrations of Simon Shadow. While my page is read and hissed at by those who are now incompetent to discover its internal merits, I revenge myself by considering the time not far distant when these, my essays, will make a neat, pretty, well bound volume for a circulating library; thumbed by the hands of enraptured beauty; ogled by the spectacles of age, and doated on by the eyes of the student, as if fearful that a particle of such a treasure should be lost. After I have thus refreshed myself with this spectacle, I have meditated on the season as equally certain when some humbler retainer of letters, will delight both himself and the community, by the publication of a volume, intituled *Beauties of Simon Shadow*. All this, my readers will observe, is part of my present plan. The difference, therefore, between Shakspeare and myself consists in this, that he did not intend his works for posterity, and that I do. I leave it for any one to determine, whether this point cannot be proved with mathematic demonstration; viz. if a work that was not written for the admiration of future ages is admired by them, a work written professedly for that purpose, must infallibly receive that admiration. I deem it both modest and correct to make this express avowal, so that posterity may have a clew to be guided in their selection of the works which they read. But sir, my plan extends much deeper than my own individual self. There is another important personage in our family, who as yet is unknown to the world. I merely designed myself as the morning star, to twinkle as the harbinger of his approaching orb. With suitable solemnity I now introduce to the public my revered and much beloved uncle Jehosophat Shadow, esq. This eminent

character whose life was devoted to letters, was peculiarly fond of the pages of Shakspeare. He was none of those vulgar readers that look for a meaning on the surface: on the contrary, he delved deep and found recondite pearls; he was an expert diver in the literary stream, and remained long under water. With the most painful and laborious industry, he investigated and explored the bottom, and opened every species of literary shellfish, in the hope of discovering some latent pearl in its belly. He laid it down as an axiom, that a genius so profound as Shakspeare would despise the thought of writing what could be discovered by ordinary minds, and maintained that literary as well as natural pearls possessed too much inherent value to swim upon the surface. Often have I seen his venerable locks bent over the page of Shakspeare, and his brows crooked with anxiety in investigating a passage, where persons of smaller intellects would have thought the meaning palpable, so that his nose which was remarkably prominent and sagacious, would be endangered by the contact. He acquired his blindness by black letter readings, but blindness was unable to destroy his *vivida vis animi*; for amid such stores of ancient learning as his tenacious memory had acquired, he could revolve the various passages and compare them with old ballads and venerable readings. His veneration for this species of literature was unbounded; there was not an old trunk within fifty miles of our dwelling, whose inside he had not scrutinized to discover the meaning of Shakspeare, and whenever the traces of an aged print could be discovered, his joy was unbounded. Fearful that the precious relic should receive still further injury by an attempt to remove it from its place, he purchased the trunk, and had the same carefully deposited in his study. In process of time these articles multiplied so fast, that his study was denominated the trunk-maker's shop. Never shall I forget the brilliancy of the figure by which in conversation with me, he testified his reverence for the bard of Avon. One critic, he exclaimed, compared Shakspeare to the sun, another to the moon, and another to the seven stars; but I say (mark, Mr. Editor, the emphasis of that *I*!) I say he resembles the sun, moon and seven stars shining all at once. This was said, sir, with eyes that beamed animation through his spectacles and pronounced with that authoritative and decisive tone that true genius, above all rivalry, can only hope to maintain. Sun, moon and stars, shining all at once! what splendor of fancy! And yet sir, I have reason to believe, and I have the assurance of

his own word, that this was not a preconcerted expression, but it burst involuntarily from his lips while meditating on the vastness of the subject. So pleased was my uncle himself with the thought, he declared, he felt at that moment all the grandeur of Shakspeare himself. Having thus fortified himself with old trunks, ballads, songs, and newspapers, he began to compare the passages of Shakspeare with their contents, with the most ardent and persevering industry. His conjectural emendations of certain passages of Shakspeare from such respectable documents are in the highest degree both plausible and ingenious. These alterations he has left in his papers behind him, and he has carefully referred to the trunk, ballad, or newspaper, that authorizes his reading. Sincerely do I lament that he did not live to finish the plan which he had laboured so assiduously to accomplish and publish an entire new edition of Shakspeare so corrected and amended. That the public may judge of his competency for that arduous office, I shall select from his venerable manuscripts certain passages so amended and the authority on which such amendment were made. Hamlet says,

“ ’Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all.”

This reading my uncle Jehosophat very properly rejected, because Shakspeare in another place is made to say,

“ Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just,
And he but naked though lock’d up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.”

Shakspeare, he observes, here intimates that conscience must be corrupt before its possessor is made a coward by it, which is not intimated in the line above quoted; and it was one of my uncle’s high peculiarities always to take a line of Shakspeare by itself, and never to consider its connexion with precedent or subsequent lines when he sought for a meaning. He rendered the passage thus,

“ ’Tis conscience that makes *cowherds* of us all.”

This alteration he made on the authority of an old print which inclosed a stick of sugarcandy that a child of his was at that time greedily devouring. The lines of the old ballad found on that invaluable paper which I have ever since carefully preserved were these,

“ Conscience can make a cowherd smile
Bye baby bantling bye.”

How peculiarly, exclaims my philosophic uncle in a note, are the most important things discovered! Who could be enabled to trace without this explanation the connexion between a line of Shakspeare and a roll of sugar candy. I will to give another of my uncle Johosophat's emendations. Shakspeare is made to say,

"How now, Hecate, you look angrily."

Nonsense exclaims my uncle Shadow in his marginal comment, it should be rendered

"How now he-cat, you look angrily."

This emendation he thought warranted by a reference to the play itself. In the very first scene we are presented with a "rat without a tail," and likewise with the "mewing of a brindled cat;" now why the cat should be in this plight or the rat does not appear in our ordinary lections. But my uncle supposes that this brindled cat (no other than the he-cat spoken of above) looked angrily because he had devoured only a moiety of the rat (the tail), and having an appetite for more looked indignant as cats do in such cases. This accounts for the mewing of the cat also. That this was the ancient habit of this house-animal is evident from a venerable authority no less than the old New England Primer, where it is stated that

"The cat does play
And after slay."

But such emendations are too precious to be bountifully scattered; and which, by being done may injure the sale of the meditated volume of my uncle's Shakspeare, now contemplated to be published.

SIMON SHADOW.

BULLS OR BLUNDERS, FAMILIAR TO THE ANCIENTS.

THE confidence with which an endless variety of blunders have been attributed, as positive matters of fact, to the Irish, and, the almost exclusive appropriation of what are called blunders, to that people, while they divert the million, have been viewed with contempt by the wise few, who well know that such things are the growth of every soil, and by the learned, who have authority for saying, that they have been known in all ages. A Platonic philosopher, who flourished in the fifth century, has left behind him

many of those uttered in his time, which are now found printed in jest books and newspapers, as spick and span-new bulls, *lately* or a *few days ago*, uttered by some Irishman. A few of them, translated from the Greek, are laid before our readers.

EGYPTIAN BULLS, OF FOURTEEN HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

From the *Facetiae* of Hierocles.

A silly fellow, endeavouring to swim, was nearly drowned, upon which he swore, that he never would venture into the water again till he could swim.

A foolish fellow, visiting a sick man, inquired about his health. The man could not answer him. At this he became angry, and said: "I hope soon to be sick myself, and then I won't answer you."

A foolish fellow, wishing to teach his horse to live upon little, gave him no food at all. The horse, of course, died of hunger. "I have met with a great loss," said the fool; "for just as I had taught him to live without food, he died."

A foolish fellow, having a house for sale, carried a brick, taken from it, as a specimen.

A foolish fellow, wishing to see how he looked when asleep, shut his eyes, and put a looking-glass to his face.

The same man, having got a cask of wine, sealed it up. His servant, however, made a hole in the bottom, and by that means stole part of the wine. The master was astonished to find the wine diminished, while the seals remained unbroken. A friend advised him to examine the bottom of the vessel. "Why you silly fellow," answered he, "the bottom part is safe; it is the upper part only that has been stolen."

A silly fellow, seeing some sparrows on a tree, came slily and shook the tree; opening his bosom at the same time, in expectation that the birds would fall into it.

The same foolish fellow, meeting another foolish fellow, said, "I was told that you were dead."—"You see (said the other) that can't be; for here I am."—"Yes, yes, (replied the first) but the man who told me so, is much more to be relied upon than you."

A silly fellow having been told that a crow would live two hundred years, said, he would try one, and satisfy himself whether this was true or not.

Being overtaken in a storm, and perceiving that every body on board was looking about for some means of safety, he laid hold on an anchor.

Meeting a man, whose twin-brother had lately died; "pray (said he) is it you, or your brother, that is dead?"

Upon the point of making a voyage, attended by his servants, he expressed a desire of making his will; and, perceiving his servants were apprehensive of danger, he desired them not to be uneasy, for he had left all of them their freedom.

Having occasion to cross a river, he went into the boat on horse-back; observing, that he was in great haste.

Being in want of necessaries, he sold his books; about which time he writes to his father, and desires his congratulations, for that his books had already begun to afford him nourishment.

His son having gone into the army, previously to a battle, promised to bring off the head of one of the enemy. "You may return (said he) without a head, provided you do but come back safe and sound."

Having received a letter from a friend, desiring him to purchase some books, and having neglected it till it was too late, he excused himself, by saying, "You wrote to me, respecting the purchase of some books, but I never received your letter."

HIEROCLES, from whose "FACETIÆ," the above bulls are extracted, was a philosopher of Alexandria, and lived about the year of our Lord 485. It is singular, that Mr. and Miss Edgeworth (the joint authors of the *Essay on Irish Bulls*) should either not have known, or not have noticed, this strong proof, that many a blunder had been charged upon the Irish nation very unjustly.

FRENCH AND ENGLISH WOMEN.

AN English woman, unless she possesses strength of mind, a good understanding, a right idea of honour and virtue, and is likewise under the influence of a man of sense, who knows the world, and moreover how to govern the actions of his wife, will return home from the continent of Europe a coxcomb, both in dress and manners, and at least her *morals* corrupted, if not her *person*.

English women, in endeavouring to imitate the French and Italian women, have in general overshot their mark.* We see

* Should the superiority of the morals of the English women be questioned, certainly their superiority in decency of manners are indisputable, and this superiority is more conspicuous in women of a certain age, than in

now very little of the amiable bashfulness which was formerly their distinguishing characteristic. They do not consider that a French woman can use those freedoms with impunity, in *her own* country, which would stamp *even her* as a *courtesan*, if she was guilty of the same indecencies in England. Then how much worse does it appear in the *naturally* reserved English women, who throw off that native diffidence and modesty, for which they once were thought superior to the females of every other nation under the sun, and were admired by all foreigners. The truth is, a French woman knows *how far* to go, and the English woman knows *not where* to stop. The only reason that can be assigned for this difference is, the former will indulge herself with going great lengths in gallantry without at all indangering her heart; as for the most part, the French females are as much strangers to the finer feelings, as they are to sentiment; but the generality of the latter, who, on the contrary, possess exquisite sensibility, are always in danger of falling, whenever they permit *too far*, even those sort of innocent freedoms which are liable to make an impression on their heart. The person of an English woman is never in danger unless her heart is.

OBSERVATIONS ON PASSION.

By a French Author.

IN every country in the world, mankind are more or less subject to passion, and its effects vary according to the climate and custom of the people. At Japan, for instance, a man rips open his own body in the presence of his adversary, who is obliged to do the same, on the pain of being looked upon as a coward. In Italy, a man poniards his enemy; this is much more convenient. In Spain, they plunge their swords into each other, with a degree of gravity enough to make a man expire with laughter. In France, they

the younger part of the sex. Englishmen have a sort of national regard for propriety, which deters a female from lingering on the confines of gallantry, when age has warned her to withdraw. But in France, antique dowagers, and faded spinsters, are all gay, laughing, *rouged* and indecent: so that, abating the subtraction of teeth, and admission of wrinkles, the disparity between ONE score and FOUR is not so great.

Gay rainbow silks their mellow charms enfold,
Nought of these beauties, but themselves, is old.

mount a coach together, exchange mutual civilities on the way, then alight in the "Bois de Boulogne," and with the utmost pleasantry imaginable, give one another the choice of having their throats cut, or their brains blown out. In England, they lay their hat, wig and clothes in the middle of the street, and bruise each other with their fists till they are tired. This effect of rage, the least silly of all of them, inasmuch as it is least dangerous, has its particular rules, from which the combatants must never deviate, and which, besides, the spectators always take care shall be observed. The combatants are forbidden to strike each other anywhere below the waistband. They must not pull one another's hair, if they happen to have any; nor must either strike his antagonist while he is down. They may kill one another if they can, by blows on the head and breast, and the victor is carried off in triumph by the enraptured multitude.

ANECDOTES OF WEST, THE PAINTER.

MR. EDITOR. The following anecdotes of Mr. West I had from his own mouth, in a conversation which I enjoyed with him at his house, on the 15th of November, 1807. I put them to paper the instant I returned home; and, as whatever relates to the public character of a great man is public property, I trust I am not acting improperly in offering them for the enrichment of your miscellany.

I am, sir, your humble servant.

WHEN Mr. West was painting his *Death of Wolfe*, an heroic picture, which was treated in so novel a manner that the artist thought to conceal it until its completion, archbishop Drummond, for whom Mr. West had before painted his *Agrippina*, accidentally came into the room, and was so greatly struck with that boldness of innovation which dressed an heroic action in modern attire, that, after some questions of doubt as to its success, he went for Sir Joshua Reynolds, and in less than an hour they were both in Mr. West's painting room. When Sir Joshua came in, he expressed the greatest alarm for Mr. West's reputation, warned him of his hazardous attempt, and told him the people of England would never be reconciled to heroes in coats and waistcoats. However, Mr. West said he would send for the archbishop and Sir Joshua when the picture was completed, and, if they condemned it

then, it should go into his closet; but that he had determined to venture upon a picture which would speak to the meanest intellects, to show some illiberal critics, who had before accused him of plagiarism from old basso relievos, that he could paint from himself. When the picture was completed, Mr. West brought his friends to view it, according to his engagement. Sir Joshua stood silent before it about a quarter of an hour, and then very liberally told Mr. West that the picture would not only succeed, but would open a new era in painting.

Garrick offered to lie for Wolfe; but Mr. West refused the offer upon the plea that if the general were painted from the actor, the figure would inevitably be Garrick, and not Wolfe.

Mr. West expresses himself highly thankful that his studies in painting were unknown and unregarded as they were; for by that means he went to them without any of those prejudices which schools impart. When Mr. West went to Italy, so far was he from relishing the style of painting which then obtained there, that he saw and ridiculed its absurdities at once. At that time nothing was painted there but madonas and children, with perhaps two or three Cupids in the air; and, in England, no characters in an heroic picture were represented in any thing else than Roman or Gothic armour. Even Sir Joshua Reynolds, till after Mr. West's time, never painted a portrait but in a fancy dress. All this was altered by West's *Death of Wolfe*; and it was for this style of painting, and not for his *Regulus* (the first picture Mr. West painted for the king) or his *Agrippina*, that France eulogized Mr. West when they gave him that sumptuous entertainment upon admitting him a member of the National Institute.

RICANT, in his *History of the Turks*, says of them, that they so confound chronology and history, as to assert that *JOB* was a *judge* in the court of King *SOLOMON*, and *ALEXANDER THE GREAT* one of his *generals*.

FRAGMENTS OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY.

THE PLAUDITE, OR END OF LIFE.

If after rude and boisterous seas,
My wearied pinnace here finds ease;

If so it be I've gain'd the shore
With safety of a faithful oar;
If, having run my bark on ground,
Ye see the aged vessel crown'd,
What's to be done, but on the sands
Ye dance, and sing, and now clap hands.
The first act's doubtful; but we say
It is the last commends the play.

THE CHANGES.

TO CORINNA.

Be not proud, but now incline
Your soft ear to discipline.
You have changes in your life,
Sometimes peace, and sometimes strife;
You have ebbs of face, and flows,
As your health or comes or goes;
You have hopes, and doubts, and fears,
Numberless as are your hairs.
You have pulses that do beat
High, and passions less of heat.
You are young, but must be old;
And, to these, you must be told,
Time, ere long, will come and flow
Loathed furrows in your brow;
And the dimness of your eye
Will no other thing imply,
But you must die
As well as I.

ON HIMSELF.

Here down my wearied limbs I'll lay,
My pilgrim's shaft, my weed of gray,
My palmer's hat, my scallop shell,
My cross, my cord, and all farewell!
For having now my journey done,
Just at the setting of the sun,
Here I have found a chamber fit,
(God and good friends be thank'd for it!)
Where if I can a lodger be,
A little while from tramples free,

At my uprising next, I shall,
 If not requite, yet thank ye all.
 Meanwhile, the holyrood hence fright
 The fonter friend, and evil spright,
 From scaring you or yours this night!

UPON BEN JONSON.

After the archpoet, Jonson, died,
 The sock grew loathsome, and the buskin's pride,
 Together with the stage's glory, stood
 Each like a poor and pitied widowhood.
 The cirque profan'd was, and all postures rack'd;
 For men did strut, and stride, and stare, not act.
 Then temper flew from words; and men did squeak,
 Look red, and blow, and bluster, but not speak.
 No holy rage, or frantic fires, did stir
 Or flash about the spacious theatre;
 No clap of hands, or shout, or praises-proof,
 Did crack the playhouse sides, or cleave her roof.
 Artless the scene was; and that monstrous sin
 Of deep and arrant ignorance came in;
 Such ignorance as theirs was, who once hiss'd
 At thy unequall'd play, The Alchymist.
 O! fie upon them! Lastly too, all wit
 In utter darkness did, and still will, sit:
 Sleeping the luckless age, till that she
 Her resurrection has again with thee.

AN EPITAPH UPON A VIRGIN.

Here a solemn fast we keep,
 While all beauty lies asleep.
 Hush'd be all things; no noise here
 But the toning of a tear,
 Or a sigh of such as bring
 Cowslips for her covering.

TO DAISIES, NOT TO SHUT SO SOON.

Shut not too soon; the dull-ey'd night
 Has not as yet begun
 To make a seizure on the light,
 Or to seal up the sun.

No marigolds yet closed are,
 No shadows great appear;
 Nor doth the early shepherd's star
 Shine like a sparkle here.
 Stay but till my Julia close
 Her life-begetting eye;
 And let the whole world then dispose
 Itself to live or die.

HIS ALMS.

Here I'll live,
 And somewhat give
 Of what I have
 To those who crave
 Little or much,
 My alms is such;
 But if my deal
 Of oil or meal
 Shall fuller grow,
 More I'll bestow.
 Mean time, be it
 Ev'n but a bit,
 Or else a crumb,
 The scrip hath some.

THE WILLOW GARLAND.

A willow garland thou didst send,
 Perfum'd, last day, to me,
 Which did but only this portend,
 I was forsook by thee.
 Since so it is, I'll tell thee what:
 To-morrow thou shalt see
 Me wear the willow; after that,
 To die upon the tree.
 As beasts unto the altars go
 With garlands drest; so I
 Will, with my willow-wreath, also
 Come forth and sweetly die.

DRAMATIC CENSOR.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.—MR. COOKE IN SHYLOCK.

[Continued from page 261.]

BEFORE we proceed in our further observations on this play and its performance, we must mention a fact relating to it, which, by an oversight altogether unaccountable to ourselves, we omitted in its proper place, the outset of this criticism.

There is reason to believe, that from the time Lord Lansdowne gave to the stage his comedy of "The Jew of Venice," an alteration, or rather a debasement of Shakspeare's Merchant of Venice, the latter never was acted till the year 1741. The pedantic phantom of the unities had flapped its owl wings round his lordship's head, and he thought that by giving the play regularity in the plot, he should make a comedy superior to the original. But he was greatly deceived, and, from that which we now see it, made it almost as vapid a piece as any of his own nerveless, watergruel compositions. Yet the public being unaccustomed to witness the performance of the great original, received that miserable shadow of it, and were in the habit of seeing and approving of it in representation. What must those who know how to set a just value on this noble composition, as they see it performed by Cooke, think of the judgment and taste of Lord Lansdowne, and of the merit of his play, when they hear that Shylock was reduced in it to a mere subordinate character, and was always performed or rather farcified by some low buffoon of a comedian.

Macklin, who possessed a vigorous discriminating judgment, a fine natural taste, acute penetration, and with these a consciousness of his own strength which made him bold, resolved to revive the old comedy, and restore Shakspeare the stage, and the public to their rights in it. The bare attempt to substitute it in the place of a comedy so popular as the Jew of Venice, seemed to the manager, as well as to all who heard it, an act of temerity which could not fail to bring down upon Macklin's head the weight of public indignation. Quin, in the rude language he was accustomed to

use, under the abused name of bluntness, swore that Macklin ought to be hissed off the stage for his presumption; and Fleetwood, the manager, argued the matter in rational and friendly terms, observing that, even granting the original to be as much superior to the alteration of it as Macklin thought it, still it would be considered as arrogance in him to persevere in his intention, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Quin, to the high authority of Lord Lansdowne, and to the public judgment itself, which had given the stamp of approbation to *The Jew of Venice*. He earnestly intreated him, therefore, to abandon his project, and strenuously urged the probability that his character as an actor, and his favour with the public, would become the victims of his rashness and obstinacy.

Sustained by his own native vigour, Macklin stood unmoved by every argument and persuasion, remained firm to his purpose, and declared that, be the consequence to himself what it might, he would run the hazard. The thing was right to be done, and if it should fail, the fault would be that of the public: it should not, he said, be his. Accordingly the play was put in rehearsal. Macklin, who had studied the part of Shylock with profound attention, made the players stick close, as he himself did, to the text of Shakspeare throughout. During the rehearsal, however, he took care not to disclose the manner in which he intended to personate the character, by a look, a tone, a gesture, or an attitude; but merely repeated the lines in the unimpassioned tone of one reading an advertisement in a newspaper. This threw new obstacles in his way, and occasioned a multitude of vexatious remarks and objections from the players who, one and all, peremptorily declared, Quin, who played Antonio being at their head too, that Macklin's acting alone would spoil the performance. But he, who had from the beginning had a view to the character, as a ladder by which he should mount to the summit of his profession, being convinced that it afforded unbounded scope for the display of his talents, and for capital acting, secretly derided their observations, kept his mind to himself, and brought every thing to a state perfectly fit for representation. The comedy of the Merchant of Venice, *as written by Shakspeare*, was announced. And as the whole strength of the company was given to it, the house was crowded full in every part; some coming from curiosity, some from liking to the notion of Macklin, and to support him, and some to express their disapprobation. QUIN, MILWARD, MILLS, MRS. CLIVE, and MRS. PRITCHARD

performed in it. When will the Merchant of Venice be so well filled again?

In the whole history of the stage, there is not to be found one crisis more interesting than this; one more worthy of a minute relation.

Fleetwood the manager was in a most painful state of apprehension and anxiety. The actors were chuckling at the prospect of Macklin's disgrace. Macklin himself, though firm as a rock, was far from being at ease. He knew he was right; but the audience—ay, there was the rub! It was a full, a tremendous tribunal, and the judges might be partial, perverted, inlisted on the other side. The old gentleman has often talked of his feelings at that juncture, as surpassing all that he had ever experienced in his life.

The whole is so admirably described by Macklin's relation and biographer, that we think it would be a pity to take it out of his words, the purport of which he unquestionably had collected from the veteran himself, long before his death.

“The curtain was drawn up, and the performers who had to open the play went on, and were received in the usual way. But when Shylock and Bassanio entered, in the third scene, there was an awful, a solemn silence. A pin might have been heard, if dropt upon the stage. Nothing, Mr. Macklin has declared, ever affected him so much as the coolness that was observed by the audience at his entrance. He had been then, for several years, a great favourite with the town, and the audience had been accustomed to greet him on his first entrance, with repeated plaudits. We shall leave it to the reader to conceive the state of Mr. Macklin's feelings at this juncture; for it is impossible to describe them. Not a hand moved to encourage him; on the contrary, every thing around him seemed to conspire towards his discomfiture. The terrified looks of the manager, the malicious sneers of the actors, and the tremendous silence of a brilliant and crowded audience, all united to strike him with terror, and confound him with dismay.

Notwithstanding all this, he approached with Bassanio, who solicits a loan of three thousand ducats, on the credit of Antonio—still not a whisper could be heard in the house. On the entrance of Antonio, the Jew makes the audience acquainted with his motives of antipathy to the merchant: Mr. Macklin had no sooner delivered this speech than the audience burst out into a thunder of applause, and in proportion as he afterwards proceeded to exhibit

and mark the malevolence, the villany, and the diabolical atrocity of the character, so in proportion did the admiring and delighted audience testify their approbation of the actor's astonishing merit, by still louder and louder plaudits and acclamations, to the end of the play. Never was a performer's triumph more complete; never were enemies and opponents more confounded and abashed; never was manager more agreeably surprised. The sudden, unexpected, and happy catastrophe of that night's representation conferred on Mr. Macklin immortal fame as an actor, and transmitted to posterity another proof of the amazing genius and wonderful talents of the unrivalled Shakspeare. The play was repeated again and again, with unbounded approbation. In short, it ran nineteen nights successively, the last of which was appropriated to Mr. Macklin's benefit."

This performance so forcibly struck a gentleman who was present, that, in the enthusiasm of his feelings, he exclaimed aloud,

THIS is the Jew
That Shakspeare drew.

We have the evidence of Macklin himself, as well as the general hearsay evidence of the times, for saying, that the person who paid this elegant and applicable compliment was no less a man than the great bard of Twickenham, Alexander Pope. Some persons of unnecessary, officious scrupulosity, however, have questioned the probability of this, as an anachronism; but let it be remembered, that the first representation of Shylock was on the 14th of February, 1741, and that Pope lived to the 30th of May, 1744; that is, three years and nearly three months after.

From that time, "The Merchant of Venice" has kept possession of the stage, and "The Jew of Venice" been very properly exiled from it. Indeed, what can be thought of the taste or judgment of the noble author of the latter, when it is stated that, so far from being made detestable, his lordship's Shylock is made a droll, and perfectly laughable. For instance, being at supper at Bassanio's, he is seated at a table separate from the christian company, in conformity with the supposed tenets of his tribe; and drinks to his *money* as to his only friend.

Macklin was the first player to whom the dramatic representation of Great Britain stood indebted for the happy alteration that has taken place in the costume of the stage, which Mr. Kemble

has the credit of having followed up to its present state; and which, though still occasionally inconsistent,* is infinitely more rational than it was under the regime of Mr. Garrick, during whose management the absurdities of the stage dress, if enumerated in detail, would make a very long article. Macklin was the first who changed the dress of Macbeth from scarlet and gold in the modern cut, a three-cocked hat, a long plaited military queue with a bunch at the end of it, and by way of royal dignity, after his investment at Scone, a large bag and solitaire, to the Scottish kilt, hose, and plaid.

When he had fixed upon playing Shylock, he made it his business to go frequently to the Exchange, and enter into conversation with Mediterranean traders, from whom he learned that, by an ordinance of the republic of Venice, the Jews were compelled to wear red hats as a distinguishing badge of their tribe, and from that time he always wore one, in the character of Shylock.

Of the plays of Shakspeare which have undergone deterioration from the barbarous hands of alterers and innovators, we know not one, the spoliations on which, auditors of taste and feeling have greater cause to regret, than this of the Merchant of Venice. According to Shakspeare, the second act opens with a scene, which by a license no pretence can justify, has been expunged, though it is exquisitely beautiful. All our readers know the story of Portia and the caskets. Of the many suiters who come to try their fate, Bassanio is the only one which the pruning knife of the London managers has left visible to the audience; and Mrs. Inchbald's and other modern editions of the plays follow, not the author's text, but the

* For instance, our Othellos of late wear turbans. In the name of wonder why? Though a Moor by birth, Othello is a Venetian general; and to the Venetians, every thing Mahometan was ever alien and abhorrent. Their customs, their laws, their prejudices forbade any innovation in their military uniform; more particularly a mussulman innovation. Yet, while Cassio and Iago, the officers of his corps, his lieutenant and ancient, or ensign, wear hats, in the Venetian costume, Othello is ornamented with a turban. Is it out of compliment to the OTTOMITES he is sent to overthrow, or to the malignant and the turban'd Turk, that beat a Venetian, and traduced the state? This is Kemble all over; this is studying *the picturesque* with a vengeance. Mr. Garrick once took it in his head to play Othello, and figured away in an entire Moorish dress. And that absurdity it was that occasioned the facetious Quin to call him **DESDEMONA'S LITTLE BLACK BOY WITH THE TEA KETTLE.**

prompter's books. Thus, nine in ten at least of those who read the play are not only deprived of the benefit of some of the most excellent passages of the poet, but are shut out from the knowledge that such passages ever had existence. Let the reader judge whether we are correct or otherwise, from the following specimens. Morochius, a prince of Morocco, who is one of Portia's suiters, opens the second act with the following charming speech:

Mor. " Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phæbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear,
The best regarded virgins of our clime
Have lov'd it too:—I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Portia. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice directions of a maiden's eyes:
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing,
But, if my father had not scanted me,
And hedg'd me by his will, to yield myself
His wife, who wins me by the means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet,
For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
To try my fortune. By this cimiter,—
That slew the Sophy, and a Persian prince,
That won three fields of sultan Solyman,—
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady: but, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice,
Which is the better man? The greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand.
So is Alcides beaten by his page:
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,

Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Since we have entered on the subject of those excisions from the play, we will go on with it, and, by quoting the parts cut out, show how much is lost to the admirers of poetry. Morochius being brought to the caskets, ponders upon the choice he shall make in the following speech:

Some god direct my judgment!—Let me see,
I will survey the inscriptions back again:—
What says this leaden casket?
“Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath.”
Must give!—For what?—For lead?—Hazard for lead?
This casket threatens: men that hazard all,
Do it in hope of fair advantages;
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give, nor hazard aught for lead.
—What says the silver with her virgin hue?
“Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.”
—As much as he deserves!—Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady;
And yet to be afraid of my deserving,
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve!—Why, that's the lady;
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But, more than these, in love I do deserve her:
What if I stray'd no farther, but close here?—
Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold.
“Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.”
Why that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts, and the wasty wilds
Of wide Arabia, are now as thoroughfares
For princes to come view fair Portia;
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like, that lead contains her?—'Twere damnation

To think so base a thought; it were too gross
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
 Or shall I think, in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O sinful thought!—Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
 A coin, that bears the figure of an angel
 Stamped in gold; but that's insculp'd upon:
 But here an angel, in a golden bed,
 Lies all within.—Deliver me the key;
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may.
Portia. Here, take it, prince, and if my form lie there,
 Then I am yours.
Mor. O hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll!—I'll read the writing.

* All that glitters is not gold;
 Often have you heard that told;
 Many a man his life hath sold,
 But my outside to behold;
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.
 Had you been as wise as bold,
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
 Fare you well; your suit is cold."

In this speech of Morochius there are some delightful effusions of poetic fancy; and the lines found inscrolled in the casket contain some noble moral truths, which ought not to be lost to the audience. But still superior to these, in the loftiness of the flights and truth of characteristic expression, as well as in sterling moral wisdom, are the speeches of the prince of Arragon, another suiter of the fair Portia. Being conducted by her to the caskets, he opens his observations with the pertinent, unceremonious solemnity of a high Spaniard.

I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
 First, never to unfold to any one
 Which of the caskets 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
 Of the right casket, never in my life
 To woo a maid in way of marriage; lastly,
 If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
 Immediately to leave you, and begone.

Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear,
 That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

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A coin, that bears the figure of an angel:
Stamped in gold; but that's insculp'd upon:
But here an angel, in a golden bed,
Lies all within.—Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may.

Portia. Here, take it, prince, and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours.

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll!—I'll read the writing.

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Often have you heard that told;
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If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you, and begone.

Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear,
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Arrag. And so have I addrest me:—fortune, now
 To my heart's hope!—Gold, silver, and base lead.
 “Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath:”
 You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
 What says the golden chest?—Ha!—let me see—
 “Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.”
 What many men desire!—That many may be meant
 Of the fool multitude, that choose by show,
 Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
 Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
 Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
 Even in the force and road of casualty.
 I will not choose what many men desire,
 Because I will not jump with common spirits,
 And rank me with the barbarous multitude.
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house,
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
 “Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves;”
 And well said too: for who shall go about
 To cozen fortune, and be honourable,
 Without the stamp of merit?—Let none presume
 To wear an undeserved dignity.
 O that estates, degrees, and offices
 Were not deserv'd corruptly! And that clear honour
 Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!
 How many then should cover that stand bare?
 How many be commanded that command?
 How much low peasantry would then be gleaned
 From the true seed of honour, and how much honour
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,
 To be new-varnish'd?—Well, but to my choice:
 “Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves.”
 I will assume desert; give me a key for this,
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

Portia. Too long a pause for that which you find here.

Arrag. What's here? The portrait of a blinking idiot,
 Presenting me a schedule?—I will read it.
 How much unlike art thou to Portia!
 How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves!
 Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
 Is that my prize?—Did I deserve no better?

Portia. To offend and judge are distinct offices, and
 Of opposed natures.

Arrag. What is this?

“The fire seven times tried this;
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss;
Some there be that shadows kiss,
Such have but a shadow's bliss;
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er, and so was this;
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head:
So begone, sir; you are sped.”

The more the nature and importance of these passages are considered, with a view to the author's intention, as well as to the entirety of the drama, the more cause there will appear to wonder at the motives of those who first set the example of disfiguring it, and to condemn the taking of such an injudicious, unwarrantable liberty. It would not be truth to say they are digressive. The play consists of two actions, founded on two separate, remote original stories—that of the bond for the pound of flesh, and that of the caskets, which stories Shakspeare has so conducted as to make them mutually aid each other, but each of which is so constructed as to unfold itself. The characters of the two suiters, Morochius and Arragon, are as necessary to the full development of the casket plot, as Tubal or Launcelot to the accomplishment of the plot of the bond. This appears not only from the chasm which the excision of them makes in the progressive explanation of the story, but from the care and amount of mind bestowed upon them by the poet: for where has he exhibited more studious art, where displayed more captivating or affecting sentiment? In the scenes with those suiters the fable is cleared up in a gradual order calculated to unfold to the audience, in a natural way, the particular provision in the will of Portia's father, by which she is bound on the subject of marriage. By the two several disappointments of those two suiters, the mind is better prepared for the successful adventure of the third, and the contents of all the caskets are thereby laid open as they should be to the audience. But how is it, as now acted?—The story, of itself sufficiently improbable, is rendered more difficult of belief and unintelligible by being left without explanation till Bassanio comes to the caskets; when scraps, taken from the speeches of Morochius and the prince of Arragon, are, through

his mouth, lugged in by the head and shoulders, to explain what ought to have been explained before.

Moreover, it is evident that Shakspeare intended to inforce one great moral sentiment by the three different choices, and to make the speeches of the three suiters the vehicles of it; any one of them being taken away, the poet's intention is frustrated; the plan is interrupted; and the moral is left incomplete. The design of the poet is manifestly this:—the disappointment of Morochius, who chooses the golden casket, intimates that outward show and ornament are treacherous and deceptive, or as Bassanio afterwards says,

The world is still deceiv'd by ornament;

the disappointment of the second shows what fate that man deserves who, though wise enough to despise external ornament, is yet enslaved to vanity, in the excess of which Arragon flatters himself that because the silver casket promises that he who chooses it shall meet what he deserves, he must necessarily succeed on account of his deserts; while the choice of the third, who selects, for its plainness, the lead, which rather threatens than promises, accomplishes the moral. Perhaps a more beautiful but keen satire on vanity never was imagined than that of the prince of Arragon's finding the expected reward of his great merit nothing more than a fool's head.

They, who have thus mutilated the Merchant of Venice, deserve to find, in their casket, a fool's head, with a bobbin tied round the neck of it.

Whether the foregoing observations are founded in truth or not, may, without difficulty, be inferred from the speech of Bassanio when commenting on the caskets. After having meditated on them for some time, he breaks out abruptly—

So may the outward shows be least themselves.
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on its outward parts.
How many cowards, whose hearts are yet as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
 The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
 Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk?
 And these assume but valour's baser part
 To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
 And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight;
 And therein works a miracle in nature,
 Making them lightest that wear most of it:
 So are those crisped, snaky, golden locks,
 Which make such wanton gambols in the wind,
 Upon supposed fairness, often known
 To be the dowry of a second head,
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on
 To intrap the wisest. Therefore thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
 Nor none of thee, thou common drudge
 'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
 Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught,
 Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,
 And here choose I;—Joy be the consequence.

Instead of the fine scene between Morochius and Portia, a farcical one between Launcelot, the Jew's servant and his father, old Gobbo, opens the second act. This, though full of whim and exquisitely comical, has no other use but to raise a laugh, introduce Launcelot to our acquaintance, and announce his determination to leave the Jew's service. Upon their disappearance another droll—one of a more refined kind, makes himself and his humour known to the audience, soliciting Bassanio to let him accompany him to Belmont; a request which Bassanio grants upon condition, that he will *allay with some cold drops of modesty his skipping spirit*, which Gratiano returns with so very comical a profession of gravity, that we cannot resist the inclination we have to present it to the reader.

Signior Bassanio, hear me:
 If I do not put on a sober habit,
 Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
 Wear prayer books in my pocket, look demurely;
 Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
 Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say, AMEN;

Use all the observance of civility,
 Like one studied in a sad ostent
 To please his grandam, never trust me more.

The scene between Shylock, Jessica, and Launcelot, serves to unfold the domestic manners of the Jew. His doubts and hesitation about going forth to supper; his misgivings of some mischief brewing towards his rest, because he dreamed of money bags; his alarm at hearing that there are to be masks abroad; his judaical warning to his daughter not "*to gaze on christian fools with varnished faces,*" nor "*let the sound of shallow foetry enter his sober house;*" his grudging animadversion on Launcelot's gormandizing, and the pleasure he expresses at the reflection that the *huge feeder*, as he calls him, will help to waste the money Bassanio borrows from him, are circumstantially and minutely characteristic.

The patch is kind enough; but a *huge feeder*,
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
 More than the wild cat; drones hive not with me:
 Therefore I part with him; and part with him
To one I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse.

These minute touches and delicate strokes of the pencil are the things which distinguish the portraits of Shakspeare from all others: yet, for drawing forth the powers of an actor, this scene is rather languid. To make it striking, the actor must possess that strongly marking energy of utterance and expression, which Mr. Cooke enjoys in so very extraordinary a degree.

We have heretofore observed, that there is nothing in which our wonderful poet displays the superiority of his genius more than in contriving rare and extraordinary conjunctures for the purpose of bringing out his characters in the most full and prominent relief. In the Merchant of Venice he so dexterously manages his events, however dissimilar or even contrary to each other, as to make them, apparently by accident, unite precisely at the crisis in which the concurrent operation of their opposite effects upon the person that is to be moved by them, will elicit the strongest indications of character. Thus the intelligence of his daughter's having robbed him and eloped, and of Antonio's ships being all wrecked, reach Shylock at the same time; and, as they happen to be mentioned, alternately harrow up his heart with grief and rage, or fill him with savage hope and diabolical joy.

With his usual art, Shakspeare prepares the audience for this extraordinary exhibition by a short but felicitous scene between Salarino and Salanio, who not only state Antonio's loss and deplore his hazardous situation in language which displays the amiable character of Antonio to great advantage, but describe the distraction of the Jew at his daughter's elopement in very diverting terms.

Salarino. I never heard a passion so confus'd
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets:
"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!
Fled with a christian! O my christian ducats!
Justice! The law!—My ducats and my daughter!
A sealed bag—two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!"
Let good Antonio look he keeps his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Shylock's joining Salarino and Salanio just at the very moment they are speaking of him, his ducats, and his daughter, is happily imagined; and never yet was there conceived any thing more appropriate than the agonies of grief and the distraction he exhibits on the mention of his loss on the one hand, and the hellish antipathy he discloses to Antonio on the other;—never were there such natural transitions from frantic sorrow, distraction, and despair, to coldblooded malevolence,—from invectives on his daughter to denunciations of vengeance on Antonio, as in this and the subsequent scene with Tubal. These we think the finest parts in the play for affording scope to the talents of an actor, and in these Mr. Cooke evinced the same superiority of talents that he does in Richard, in Iago, in Pierre—in every thing. We must here again repeat, that his performance of Shylock in America has in no one instance equalled that which we saw in London. The first time we witnessed his playing the Jew was the first night he ever played it in the British metropolis: it was the first time, too, that we had the pleasure of seeing him either on or off the stage, and it was for that reason perhaps that we have considered his Shylock the best acting of his we have seen—his Kiteley excepted. The whole audience seemed to think as we did; for, not contented with the usual marks of approbation, they absolutely huzzaed, and, in all the transports people show when overjoyed at some great and unexpected acquisition, thundered "*bravo, bravo*," from all parts of the house. Indeed,

Cooke on that night so far outran all expectation, that the people seemed half frantic with enjoyment. When in the answer to Salarrino, who asks him "do you hear whether Antonio have any losses at sea or no?" Shylock replies,

"There I have another bad match: a bankrupt prodigal, who scarce dare show his head on the Rialto: a beggar that used to come so snug upon the mart—*let him look to his bond*. He was wont to call me usurer—*let him look to his bond*. He was wont to lend money on a christian courtesy—*let him look to his bond!*"

The breaks of Cooke were masterly; and the inexorable murderous bent of the black heart of Shakspeare's Jew was not less strongly expressed in the manner of uttering "*let him look to his bond*," than it was in the whetting of the knife in the last scene. Yet that itself was surpassed by the expression of savage delight with which he received from Tubal the account of Antonio's losses.

Tubal. Other men have ill luck too;—Antonio, as I heard in Genoa—
Shylock. What, what, what? Ill luck, ill luck?

The impatience of a ravening appetite for the blood of the merchant was frightfully expressed by the sudden, rapid interruption, and the abrupt repetition of the words, aided by the harsh grating of Cooke's voice—while the significant eagerness of his ghastly looks and the clawing of his fingers presented to the classic mind the imbodied image of the divine Mantuan's harpies,

—uncæque manus, et pallida semper
Ora fame.

And when Tubal, proceeding with his story, says, that Antonio
Hath an argosie cast away coming from Tripolis,—
Shylock breaks forth,

I THANK GOD! I THANK GOD! IS IT TRUE? IS IT TRUE?

Tubal. I spoke with some of the sailors that escap'd the wreck.

Shylock. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news;—Ha, ha, ha!—where? in Genoa?

The gloomy transport, the savage exultation, the ecstasy approaching to hysterical passion expressed in his laugh, and the sanguinary rancour with which he burst forth into "*I am very glad of it—I'll plague him—I'll torture him—I am glad of it*," were so natural and irresistibly impressive, that a person of a violent imagination and strong sensibility might well be startled if not appalled at it, as a circumstance of reality.

But of all the passages in this part of the play, or indeed in any other that we have seen, his delivery of that speech in which the Jew pleads to Salarino and Salanio his own wrongs and those of his tribe in vindication of his purpose, seemed to us to display this great actor's talents to most advantage; more particularly, when we first saw him in the character.

Salanio. If he forfeit, thou wilt not have his flesh—what's that good for?

Shylock. "To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me of half a million: laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated my enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?

All this Cook urged in a highly wrought climax of earnest, passionate ratiocination, rising from vehement complaint to sharp expostulation, and then to a bold assertion of the rights of his tribe as human beings; in which he exhibited some as happy discriminations as any we have ever had occasion to eulogize in this most extraordinary master of his art; and which in the part of Shylock gives him precedence to all other actors—even to Macklin himself. Having accomplished a climax of passion, which we have never seen equalled, and beyond which it appears impossible for human powers to raise it, his heart seemed big, almost to suffocation, with his feelings; he made a momentary pause. Struggling emotions seemed to half stifle his utterance. His voice sunk to a tone that denoted poignant sensibility; and in a soft pathetic strain expressive of a harassed suffering spirit, he continued to say, "If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die?" When, again resuming his vindictive shape, he said, in that fiendlike undertone, with which he at will can infuse the spirit of the devil into his words, "*And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?*" We doubt whether there ever was an actor who, in any passage of any play, could boast of more sterling merit or more perfect originality than Mr. Cooke showed, in this fine speech. The impression it first made upon us is too deep ever to be forgotten; and it is bound still more lastingly to our remembrance by a circumstance that occurred at the time. A gentleman of rare taste and rich intellectual endowments, now a thriving member of the bar of Westminster Hall, sitting beside us, at the first night's representation of the Jew by Cooke, having heard him deliver this

speech, emphatically said, "With a few more such speeches, so uttered, this Jew would make converts of all good christians."

Though Shakspeare has furnished the Jew with some very plausible arguments, the appeal to our sympathies, in the speech just adverted to, owed more to the power of the player than to the design of the poet, who has certainly exerted all his art to make the character perfectly detestable; and this is the reason why, acknowledging the general superiority of Macklin's Shylock to Cooke's, we have received more pleasure from the latter. Macklin's delivery of that speech was the infuriate ebullition of long treasured arguments of hatred, malice, and revenge; Cooke's the spontaneous effusion of a heart, malicious and revengeful, no doubt; but at the same time bleeding with the wounds of a quick and poignant sensibility to personal and national wrong. That Shakspeare intended Shylock to be perfectly detestable, is proved not only by the Jew's own words and actions, but by the characters of those opposed to him; for while he is displayed in every hateful shape; as cunning, cautious, irascible, servile, fawning, and cruel, Antonio and Bassanio are trimmed out, in contrast to him, with every private virtue: even Lorenzo is amiable. Gratiano's lively temper is finely opposed to Shylock's gloominess, selfishness, and subtlety; and the very buffoonery of Launcelot is made to lighten on the Jew, and illustrate his baseness. What an exquisite appeal is made against him, to every feeling heart, in the second scene of the third act!—Let us consider it.

Bassanio having, to the pleasure of all parties, chosen the fortunate casket, nothing appears to stand between him and perfect felicity: the cup of joy is at his lips, and all are in full measure sympathizing with him, when, unexpectedly, every thing is reversed; and a black thunder storm rises—in the shape of the Jew—and darkens their whole horizon. We know nothing which, for delicacy, tenderness, true pathos, and faithful friendship, surpasses the letter of Antonio, disclosing his dangerous circumstances to his friend. "Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow "cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and, "since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and me, if I might but see you at my death: Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: If your love do not persuade you "to come, let not my letter." Bassanio's feeling, also, shows him worthy of such friendship, and places him in a state of happy contrast

with the Jew, as does the charming Portia's too, her. As no man ever possessed equal powers for painting human villany in its most loathsome deformity, so no one has ever exhibited human goodness in such lovely colours as Shakspeare; and it is observable, that in the latter he seems least to labour, shows least art, and is ever most plain, express, and simple. For the letter of Bassanio we should in vain search for an equal among the most exquisite specimens of the simple epistolary style. A full match to it, but in another style, is Bassanio's delicate and pathetic manner of unfolding his unhappy affairs to Portia.

O, sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins—I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: And yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart: When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing: For indeed
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing lifeblood.

Nor is the following tribute of Bassanio to his friend's character less delightful:

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best conditioned and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

These and such as these are the models to which a country's youth should be directed, whether the object be to cultivate and improve the understanding, or to purify and amend the heart. Let it be observed that, still true to his text, Shakspeare's drift is to enhance the moral deformity of Shylock by contrast and juxtaposition with the most exalted virtue. For there is but one line between this

lovely picture of Antonio, and a hellish one of the Jew, given by Salanio, who brings him the letter:

Never did I know
A creature that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man.

Portia's amiable and generous conduct equals every conception that the most warm and gallant imagination can conceive of female excellence; and the slighting manner in which she mentions the three thousand ducats, at once bespeaks her wealth and munificence:

What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife;
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the debt twenty times over.

Thus admirably has our necromantic poet prepared every auditor to meet the Jew at trial with feelings suitable to the occasion—feelings of pity and alarm for the good Antonio, and of abhorrence and apprehension of the sanguinary Shylock.

In marking the character of the Jew, Shakspeare has made a climax in his relentlessness, so natural that the probability of the story appears in every scene to gain new strength. His first wish to *catch Antonio on the hip*, may be a transient effusion of anger, and no more; his obtaining the bond may be only an expedient to terrify the merchant, and demonstrate to him in the end that he had wronged the Jew: his after expressions may be only the ungovernable effusions of a rancour which yet would melt away before compunction when the execution of the bloody purpose approached; and the heart would still persuade itself that no man could be so remorseless as to persevere in a purpose so diabolical. Even at the opening of the trial the duke expresses as much—

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but leadst this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then, 'tis thought,
Thou'lt show thy mercy.

In order to slope the way to the Jew's inexorable determination to have his pound of flesh by judicial decree, which would else appear improbable, the monster is introduced to the audience, followed by the unfortunate merchant, whom the very jailer, in pity, brings abroad to solicit mercy, which the unrelenting monster not only refuses, but chides the jailer for letting him abroad: and here it is observable that, to make the Jew's motives more odious, he is made, as he proceeds in his bloody career, to lose sight of the cause of his tribe, and to bottom his vengeance solely on his own personal feelings and Antonio's benevolence to others.

Tell me not of mercy;—

This is the fool that lent out money *gratis*!—

Jailer, look to him.

Thou call'dst me dog before thou had'st a cause;

But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs;

The duke shall grant me justice.

I'll have my bond—I will not hear thee speak;

I'll have my bond, and therefore speak no more.

I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,

To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield

To christian intercessors. Follow not;

I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

To know Cooke's general acting; to have heard his voice, attentively viewed his manner, and noted his vigorous emphasis, would be enough to assure even those who have never seen him play this character, that every word he utters in this scene answers the most sanguine expectations. It is the trial scene however in which, next to the first scene of the third act already descanted upon, he blazed out with the most astonishing powers. In this, though he has much to say, he does not utter a line in which the most fastidious critic could imagine an improvement: though he has much to do, every action is perfect, characteristic, and impressive,—some indeed astonishing, novel and delightful.

To the duke, who, in a humane and pathetic speech, exhorts him to be merciful, Shylock returns an answer, in which he boldly avows his cruel determination, and attempts to justify it on the ground of antipathy:

So I can give no reason, nor I will not,

More than a lodg'd hate and certain loathing

I bear Antonio.

And to make his wickedness more complicated, he pleads an oath, by which he had sworn to have the pound of flesh, as one of his reasons for excluding all remorse:

And by our holy sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.

And again:

An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heav'n;
Shall I lay perjury on my soul?
No, not for Venice.

This kind of sophistry, or as the sagacious author of *Hudibras* shrewdly remarks, to

Compound for sins they are inclin'd to,
By damning those they have no mind to,

is an expedient to which, we fear, bad people too often have recourse. To make an overscrupulous adherence to the letter of religion a pretext for violating its ordinances in more important things, is adding profaneness to crime. Even this, Shakspeare has added to the amount of Shylock's guilt, with excellent moral effect, too. For who but must forever renounce the sin of sanctioning vice with the pretence of piety, that hears Shylock justify the perpetration of murder, by his fear of committing perjury?

To particularize every beauty struck out by Cooke in this scene would require us to be much more minute than we can be. Every line he uttered would be intitled to its particular eulogium. We must therefore confine ourselves to our prescribed limits; and indeed we yield to the necessity with great reluctance and painful self-denial. A few of those passages, however, whose novelty, as well as singular perfection, most forcibly struck us, we will not deny ourselves the pleasure of enumerating.

In every part Mr. Cooke performs, his by-play, as it is called, would give him a decided preference over all other actors; not only because it is always just, significant, exact, and illustrative of the poet, but because it never suffers the audience to be, for one moment, inattentive to the actor, or forgetful of the character: besides which, it often relieves us from the tedium of bad passages and bad performers. In the trial scene, his by-play is extremely beautiful and characteristic;—the studious and apparently reverential attention with which he listened to Portia's nervous exhortation

to mercy, and his admirable dumb show comments upon it, were correct and sterling. In these we cannot say that Macklin was inferior to him, only because Macklin never attempted them. On the contrary, many years after the veteran had made the part as well and as universally understood as it was on the day he left the stage, a point of cavil with the critics continued to be this: that the words

We do pray for mercy,
And that same prayer doth teach us all
To render deeds of mercy,

having an evident reference to the Lord's prayer, ought not to be urged by way of persuasive to a Jew, as they would rather have a tendency to exasperate than mollify him: but the genius of Cooke not only has superseded that objection, but converted it to a most interesting and impressive beauty. When Portia uttered the lines,

It is an attribute to GOD himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice.

At the name of God, Cooke bowed with pious reverence, while awe was visibly depicted in his face. The effect upon the audience of this solemn humiliation at the name of JEHOVAH was astonishing—electrical—and so general, that one would be led to imagine there was not a being in the house who escaped it,—and it would seem as if every heart was prostrate and every body involuntarily bent in unison. But when Portia conjured him to mercy in the sacred terms of "The Lord's Prayer," he shook his head, and waved his hand, intimating in the most significant and forcible manner imaginable, his rejection of the authority by which she invoked him.

In his servile praise, and affected rapturous admiration of the decision of the "wise and upright judge," Portia, he was inimitably fine. So too in the eager, abrupt, and decisive manner in which when Portia desires him to let her tear the bond, he, as if apprehensive that she will tear it, says, "When it is paid according to the tenor."

Another beauty arose upon Portia's proposing that he should have a surgeon by, to stop the wounds, lest Antonio should bleed to death. Neither directly assenting to nor refusing this, Shylock refers to the bond: "Is it so nominated in the bond?"—But instead of putting the interrogation, as if it were a thing of which he was

ignorant, Cooke's doubt about the matter, his question, and his scrutinizing examination of the writing as if to see whether it contained any such provision, were palpably *affected*, and done as an evasion; and the decisive, sneering, triumphant enjoyment he expressed in his look, and still more in his chuckle, when, returning the paper to Portia, he said, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond," were intitled to the warmest approbation that it is possible for criticism to bestow.

As to the whetting of the knife, it is a mark so very broad, that a great player like Cooke can derive no great credit from hitting it: every tolerable Shylock can do that. Two points, therefore, and only two, remain to be mentioned. The first in order is his manner of saying the words

I take *this* offer then—pay the bond—thrice,
And let the christian go.

Instead of saying it tamely, as all other Shylocks have done, "*pay the bond thrice*," he divided the word "*thrice*" from the preceding words "*pay the bond*," and uttered it with a marked emphasis, as if pinning them down to that sum, and providing against their forgetting or excluding him from the offer they had made.—The second was the melancholy groan he uttered, and the horrible expression, compounded of mortification, malice and despair, which marked his face when he left the court. Of these beauties we would fain speak as they deserve, and as we think of them, but wanting adequate words, we choose to sum up our opinion in one short sentence, **THEY WERE COOKE ALL OVER.**

PORTRAIT OF COOKE IN SIR PERTINAX.

WITH the pleasure it must naturally give us to gratify our friends, and the pride we ought to feel in being at all instrumental in bringing extraordinary genius under the public eye, we accompany this month's number of the *Mirror* with a full length portrait of Mr. Cooke in Sir Pertinax, done by Master LESLIE. It is a fact we ought to mention, because it is highly creditable to the talents of this extraordinary youth, that when his former drawing (that of Richard, which appeared in last month's number) was first handed about, the leading artists of the city, one and all, pronounced it to be impossible that a boy so young, and uninstructed in the art, should make a drawing so very perfect. One of them, a gentleman of known candour and liberality, declared to this Editor that it was incredible,—that the boy must have copied it from some British print,—and that if he had really, as was supposed, drawn it from recollection of the original, without the benefit of a sitting, he had done what no other artist in this country, and but one, that he knew of in England, could do;—in a word, that it would be, literally, a miracle. Another declared that, taking it as a copy merely, it was an extraordinary production for a youth so young and so circumstanced. When the various specimens, which the public have now before them in the Academy, were produced in proof and incredulity was vanquished, those very gentlemen were no less liberal in their applause; and gave it as their opinion that such a genius, if properly and in time cultivated, could not fail to be an ornament to the country that gave it birth. To Master Leslie it is but justice to commemorate these particulars; and it is no less due to justice to mention that America is likely to be indebted to the liberality of Messrs. Bradford and Inskeep for this native jewel's being polished to the highest perfection, and set a brilliant ornament in her annals.